

JULY, 1908

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The Popular Magazine



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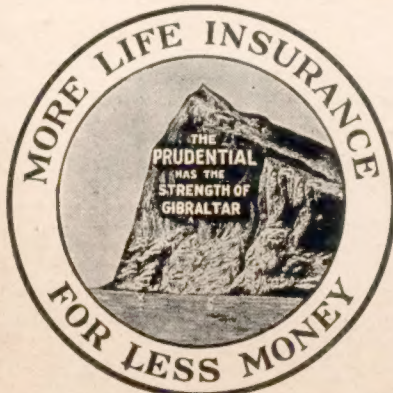
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THE POPULAR MAGAZINE

VOL. XI.

JULY, 1908.

No. 3.

The Curse of Fernando Vasquez

By J. Kenilworth Egerton

Author of "The Man With the Paw," "The Perfume of Madness," Etc.

There are few extremes to which men will not resort when animated by the lust for Gold. Even those who care nothing especially for Money in itself seemed seized with a sudden madness when engaged in the search for it. Love of country, loyalty to one's comrades, the heart's affections, all principles of honor—these all become of little moment when weighed in the balance with that which makes the mare go. This was true of most of Harry Renshaw's companions. But as for Morgan, Wildairs, Renshaw himself, and a few others, it was mainly their love of adventure and the lure of unexplored lands that caused them to undertake the daring enterprises here narrated. The whole forms one of the most thrilling tales of adventure and hairbreadth 'scapes we have ever published. We are confident this story will interest all our readers—it's so good in so many different ways.

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THAT there are stranger things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy was impressed upon my mind by the strange experience of which the following is a true relation. Aside from my own conviction of the truth of it, arrived at by personal association with and observation of Renshaw; the verification of facts which he related, by half-forgotten and long-unused histories and manuscripts of whose existence he could have had no knowledge; and, above all, the evidence of the dagger and the appearance of the hereditary stigmata on the boy Geoffry, at Renshaw's death—which are things of my own knowl-

edge—make a case which it would be difficult to overthrow.

I am not a psychologist; I do not attempt to explain the strange phenomena which made the curse of the Grand Inquisitor effective through successive generations for more than two centuries; but I give the facts, and any one with time and inclination for such speculation can form a theory to explain them. I can only say that investigation of side lines suggested by Renshaw's story; the methods of the Inquisition and more particularly the life of Fernando Vasquez, the Grand Inquisitor, and the strange powers which he exercised, reveals things even more incredible than anything in Renshaw's narrative.

Much that he told me is not suscepti-

ble of proof, for the great earthquake and tidal wave which destroyed old Port Royal in 1692, besides causing the death of more than two thousand people and the loss of untold treasure, carried beneath the waves the records of the colony; but enough history of the times survives in other places—the British Colonial Records, the British Museum, Esquemealing's autobiography and history of the buccaneers, etc., to verify his statements. My own connection with the matter was purely accidental, and due to the fact that I was detained in Kingston on business after the close of the winter season.

Renshaw was not a particularly intelligent-looking individual, but he was white; and as I do not trust the African in emergencies incidental to boat-sailing, I selected him from the crowd of boatmen who clamored for engagement at the Wherry Wharf. Out of a population of about three-quarters of a million, Jamaica possesses only some twenty thousand inhabitants whom the census classifies as white; and to attain even that small percentage it is probable that the enumerators overlook many signs of mixed blood. It was, therefore, surprising to find this undoubted Caucasian following the calling of a boatman, for this is one of the humbler occupations involving manual labor which the pure white and lightly colored creoles despise.

His boat was of the same design and rig as the others; about twenty-five feet long with a beam of eight, undecked and sloop-rigged; but it was more trimly built, better appointed and infinitely cleaner than those of his black competitors; and the rigging was as accurately set-up as that of a yacht. The name of the boat, *Revenge*, was neatly lettered on either bow and under the stern, and this distinguished it from those of the darkies, which were christened for British frigates which had been on the station, with an occasional attempt to catch the American tourist patronage with *Uncle Sam*, *The Stars and Stripes*, and the like.

Renshaw drew his boat alongside the floating stage, and I embarked with my

fishing-tackle, bait and luncheon—or rather supper-basket; for fishing in Kingston is done in the late afternoon and night; and I had a chance to observe him more closely as with the help of his crew—a boy of about fourteen years—he hoisted mainsail and jib. There was no question about his pure Caucasian blood, although sun and wind had given a bronze color to his skin; for the blue eyes, light, curly hair faded by the fierce tropical sun from light brown to almost a straw color, thin, straight lips, and long, aquiline nose with delicately chiseled nostrils, disclaimed any dash of the tar-brush.

It was not an attractive face in spite of a certain stamp of race upon it, for there was a vacant, stupid expression in the blue eyes, and the mouth indicated cruelty rather than strength; but the thing which attracted my attention most forcibly was a series of marks about his forearms—bright, livid weals running entirely around them from wrist to elbow, as if the skin had been deeply bruised by tight thongs; and when he rolled up his duck trousers marks of exactly the same kind were visible above his ankles.

The relationship between skipper and crew was soon disclosed, for the boy addressed him as "dad"; but few words passed between them after the man took the tiller; and the boy held the main-sheet, after taking a turn of it about a peg fixed under a thwart. Renshaw handled the boat skilfully as we ran down toward the harbor entrance, but he was not loquacious and never spoke except in answer to direct questions. I rather regretted my choice, for he seemed entirely ignorant of the points of interest about the harbor, but he claimed to be thoroughly posted about the fishing-grounds and that claim he justified, for over one of the harbor reefs I caught a number of snappers and groupers, Renshaw and his boy, Geoffry, silently busying themselves with repairing a torn awning cloth while I fished.

He had said barely twenty words since I entered the boat, but just as the sun was setting he suggested going

around the point for bonito. The anchor was dropped in fairly deep water close to the shore, and I had nothing to complain of in the fishing; but as darkness fell with the suddenness which it invariably does in the tropics, I was surprised by the change in my boatman.

A thin, silver crescent of moon had just risen in the east, and as its feeble rays glanced over the quiet sea he looked at it and laughed and then broke into song, a curious, old sailor's chantey extolling the delights of life on the ocean wave and more particularly the enjoyment and profit to be found in the gentle art of piracy. The boy looked at him uneasily and obeyed such orders as he gave with increased alacrity after the song was finished; these orders were accompanied by expletives more forcible than elegant. There was such an absolute change in Renshaw that I could hardly believe it was the same man—and the transformation was not for the better; but it was not until we wished to shift our fishing-ground that it reached a climax. I was startled by a burst of blasphemy and profanity from the bow, and saw Renshaw cease tugging at the anchor-cable and shake his fists at the water, into which he was peering with angry eyes.

"What is it, Renshaw, a shark?" I asked.

"Aye, a shark, or the ghost of a shark," he answered with an oath. "A devil-fish, a spawn of hell that's bothered me many a night before this."

I climbed over the thwarts and joined him, for I had always wished to see an octopus in its native element. But as I looked at the water there was nothing visible but the glimmer of the moon on the ripples caused by Renshaw furiously shaking the anchor-cable.

"You'll see naught!" he exclaimed jeeringly. "Mansfelt's house lies below there, with all the plate and riches he couldn't take with him when I sent his soul to hell. The anchor's foul in the ruins of it; but it's his black spirit that holds it there to spite me." I clambered back to my seat in the stern more rapidly than I had come, for I wished to place as much distance as the narrow

limits of the boat permitted between myself and the man who had apparently suddenly gone mad. Another furious tug at the cable and the anchor came away; Renshaw shouted abuse and defiance at his enemy below the surface as he and the boy pulled the anchor in and coiled away the cable. He was still muttering profanity when he came aft to take the tiller; as there was no escaping from his close company I tried to control my fears, and questioned him.

"Mansfelt!" he exclaimed incredulously in answer to my first question. "You never heard of Mansfelt? Then you never heard of the worst villain that ever sailed the Spanish Main." The boy looked at me with a piteous protest in his eyes, and I asked no further questions; but, in spite of my silence, Renshaw went on with increasing violence.

"A villain he was, and broke every law of our company. Didn't he cheat us at St. Catherine's and secrete the jewels and plate for himself—a crime for which he'd have flayed the skin off of any of his men? Didn't he turn Jack Williams and Portagee Manuel over to Modyford to sun-dry on his cursed gibbet at Gallows Point, because they knew of it and he feared they'd peach? Look here, where his bullet tore me."

He opened his shirt and pointed to an angry scar just below the left collar-bone. "Six inches too high for the heart, and he wasn't five feet from me; but the swine was drunk. There was one law he couldn't deny; and 'Blood for blood!' I cried as I whipped out my knife, and there was none to deny me my right. Before the drunken fool could draw another pistol I sheathed it in his black heart. His blood spurted over me and mingled with my own as he fell."

The man's face was livid and his eyes flashed as he confessed this murder to me whom he had known but a few hours. The boy looked at me, his eyes staring with terror. The object of our excursion was entirely forgotten, for Renshaw headed back for the har-

bor entrance, and I said no word to check him. We were running toward Kingston, and Renshaw acted so like one demented that I wished our voyage speedily over. Again and again he reverted to the murder and gloried in it. As we passed Gallows Point, the place where pirates were executed, he stood up in the boat and waved his hat in salute.

"Sleep well, my hearties!" he shouted. "The traitor that gave you up has paid your debt to me, but hell itself has cast him out and he's marooned six fathoms deep." After this outburst he was quiet until the boat slipped alongside the Wherry Wharf; but after I had clambered out and he sailed away, a song floated back to me over the moonlit water, an old Cavalier drinking-song casting contempt and ridicule on the Roundheads.

Early the next morning I was at the police-office, for after a troubled night I determined that as a matter of protection to the unwary I must report the man's condition. The inspector, a clean-shaven, jolly-faced Hibernian trained in the Irish constabulary, invited me into his private office and listened courteously. But a grin came to his face and a twinkle to his eye as soon as I was fairly started on my story. He heard me to the end and laughed.

"I've been 'had' on that yarn before," he said good-naturedly. "Sure, 'twas me first case when I came to this blessed colony, and I near made a fool av meself by takin' poor 'Moonstruck Renshaw' in charge for th' murder av a man that's been dead two hundred years an' more."

"What—you know all about this and still allow that man to run a harbor boat?" I asked in astonishment. "Why, he's a murderer by his own confession, and there is no question about his madness!"

"Right ye are, sir—or partly so," replied the inspector. "Mad he is—an' a lunatic by that same token, for it's only on moonlight nights he shows ut—an' when th' spell's on him he's always talkin' av stabbin' one Mansfelt, a bloody pirate that's been dead these

two hundred years, I've heard tell. He's harmless, poor devil, an' where he got th' notion I can't say, sir. Av coorse, if ye make a complaint, I'll have to take his license away, but what he makes by his boat is all th' poor divil has to live on. I've been to his house in Green Bay, an' a poor place ut is—an owl stone hut in th' bush, an' it's not me that wants to make it harder for him an' th' boy."

I saw that the inspector was thoroughly convinced of the man's harmlessness, but I shook my head dubiously. "I won't make a complaint," I answered. "You know all the facts and the responsibility is on your shoulders, but it doesn't seem safe to me."

"Sure, he's th' best sailor in th' harbor, an' they say his father was before him," replied the inspector confidently. "'Twas before my time, but I've heard tell that th' old man was moonstruck, too; but th' divil a bit av harm did he ever do."

My curiosity was somewhat excited by the inspector's remark about the pirate Mansfelt, and I went to the public library to see if such a man had ever existed. I found a very complete collection of books, pamphlets and old documents relating to the early history of the West Indies, and many references to him.

He was one of the pioneers in piracy who made old Port Royal a base; the immediate predecessor of Sir Henry Morgan, who became famous as a buccaneer leader and amassed sufficient booty to buy pardon, a knighthood and the governorship of Jamaica from Charles the Second. Modyford's name I also found—a governor of Jamaica who had issued letters of marque to the buccaneers, throwing a cloak of legality over their piratical acts.

The literature was complete as to the cruises and expeditions of the buccaneers and their reckless bravery in taking the galleons and the cities of the Spanish Main. The unmentionable tortures and barbarities practised upon the inhabitants of the cities which they sacked, the incredible amount of their plunder, and the riot and debauchery

in which it was squandered in Port Royal were minutely described in contemporary letters and autobiographies; but on two points I could gather no reliable information. Neither the time nor manner of Mansfelt's death were mentioned; he simply disappeared and was succeeded by Morgan in the leadership. Nor was there anything authentic as to the eventual fate of Morgan.

There was no question but that he amassed a tremendous fortune and rose to power in the colony; but he suddenly disappeared from the scene. One old chronicler declared that he retired to Europe and lived in luxury on his ill-gotten spoils; another that he incurred the royal displeasure and died a prisoner in the Tower of London; but no authority was given in either case.

I read for several hours, and then a great curiosity to put Renshaw to the test came over me; for either he was playing a gigantic hoax, or a most remarkable case of hereditary transmission was before me. I found him in his boat at the Wherry Wharf as I had the day before, and in five minutes we were under way. Again he was uncommunicative and answered my questions stupidly; and all memory of his outburst of the night before seemed to have slipped from his mind. I casually introduced the names of several of the buccaneer captains I had read about during the day, but he displayed no interest or recognition.

He told me his own uneventful history willingly enough; he was born in the house he now lived in, a stone hut of unknown age at Green Bay, opposite Port Royal. He had never been away from the island, but followed the occupation of his father and grandfather before him; that of a harbor boatman, picking up a precarious living by fishing for the market, carrying passengers between Port Royal and Kingston, and occasionally taking out fishing-parties of tourists. He could neither read nor write; and his ideas of the history of Port Royal were of the vaguest, and mostly picked up from the tourists who had hired his boat.

"They're always lookin' into th' water an' tryin' to see th' buildin's that tumbled into th' sea in th' earthquake," he said smiling. "I never see anythin' of 'em, an' it was long before my day; more than a hundred years ago, they say."

But when the moon rose that night there was again the strange transformation in the man. He sang, he swore strange oaths and boasted of strange deeds, and through his stories ran the very names he had disclaimed knowledge of in the daylight. It was not a connected story; it was a snatch here and there of the very things I had looked up that day, hidden in ancient documents and old books to which he could have had no access.

And this was the beginning of our strange companionship; an intimacy of moonlight nights spent on the water in his boat or at his hut in the chaparral of Green Bay; nights when he told me the story I have written down; nights when this ignorant boatman lived over again the life of his wild ancestor and was to all intents and purposes the reincarnation of Harry Renshaw of Renshaw Park, gentleman of fortune, buccaneer and adventurer. And this story, told to me in many midnight séances, I have set down as he related it, leaving out some of the details which are too coarse for modern ears, for Harry Renshaw lived in wild times and with wild people, and standards have changed since the days when Charles the Second was king.

I have told it in the first person, consecutively, without the gaps that hours of daylight or darkness caused; for except in moonlight Harry Renshaw's spirit lay at rest, and the body of his descendant, Renshaw the wherryman, was controlled only by his own ignorant, untutored mind. Many of the words he used are obsolete, and I have not endeavored to retain more of the idioms and speech of the time of the Stuarts than is necessary to suggest the personality of the buccaneer.

The detailed history of their exploits which he gloried in when the spell was on him I purposely omit, for those who

revel in the hideous story of the tortures which the lust for gold led the buccaneers to inflict can read of them in many histories; but much that is gruesome I am forced to set down, that it may make clear the reason for the terrible ending to the career of Morgan, a career I believe unparalleled in all the history of the world. Renshaw worshiped him as a hero, a rôle which modern historians do not assign to him. But Renshaw judged him as a contemporary, by the standards of his own time.

That he was received at court and honored by knighthood; that he returned in triumph to govern the colony which he had founded and from which he had been taken to England in chains, in a measure sustains Renshaw's estimate of him, rather than the condemnation of those who in these more peaceful days regard him as a profligate and a pirate.

And while it may seem incredible to modern ears that gentlemen who had passed their lives in the luxurious surroundings of courts should so far forget their gentility that in the lust for gold they should resort to unheard-of barbarity, I would remind the reader of the times in which they lived. Torture was not confined to the Inquisition—it was employed in the secular courts of every country in Europe; and it was not until 1830 that its use was made illegal in Italy, the last of the civilized countries to prohibit it.

Cruel and inhuman punishments were things of every-day occurrence; and in the tropics, where slavery with all of its abuses was universal, special devilish ingenuity was shown in devising them. In the museum at Kingston, Jamaica, there still exists the iron cage in which rebellious slaves were exposed to die of hunger and thirst. When it was found through the washing out of an old cemetery by flood some ten years ago, it still contained the bones of its last victim, which examination shows were those of a woman.

At the time of the find the local papers hailed it as a relic of the Spanish occupation, but search of old documents

proved that it was used by the English as late as 1796; and its employment was discontinued, not from motives of humanity, but because the wealthy residents about the Parade complained that the cries of the victims disturbed their slumbers. That even so gallant a cavalier as Prince Rupert of the Palatinate joined the brotherhood and took part in their forays, with the incidental barbarity, is a matter of history and makes the story which Renshaw tells seem credible.

II.

I was but eight years old when the Battle of Marston Moor was fought and one of Cromwell's Ironsides made me the heir to Renshaw Park and all its broad acres by splitting the head of my elder brother, Geoffry; but little good did that inheritance do me. My father, Sir Wilfred, was in attendance on the king, and so escaped the slaughter which fell upon the Renshaw troop recruited from our tenantry; all of this I heard from the lips of William Hasbruck, our steward, who three days after the fight came to Renshaw Park, reeling in his saddle with a saber-cut across his forehead and a bullet in his shoulder.

And then, for six years, I heard but seldom from my father, who remained with the king until the Scots sold him to the Parliament men, and he found himself a prisoner in the Tower along with many others of the king's followers.

Those six years served to give me an education such as few boys receive, for of schooling there was none and Renshaw Park was seldom unoccupied by Cromwell's soldiers, who quartered their chargers in the stables swept bare to equip the Renshaw troop, and themselves in the lofts above, the officers making themselves at home as our unbidden guests.

Fanatical, narrow-minded, psalm-singing knaves they were; but they treated me not unkindly and taught me the use of saber, pistol and musket, an education which was to stand me in good stead in days to come. And from

watching them I learned the value of discipline, from which I might have profited. And yet my apparently friendly intercourse with them was but a cloak to aid my father's designs in the service of his royal master, for William Hasbruck schooled me carefully in my part while he lay sick of his wounds, before he rode off to rejoin my father with all our silver plate on pack-horses to carry to the king's war-chest.

"Look you, Master Harry; until the king comes to his own again Renshaw Park will be no safe place for those who have drawn sword in his cause. A wee lad like you they'll not harm, and it's not probable that they'll hinder your movements if you be careful and do not excite suspicion. Many's the message that will come this way that a small lad might well carry farther. And mayhap the heads of grown men will depend on that lad's sharpness. Mind you this well—that when one comes to you, no matter how dressed or circumstanced, that says in any talk, 'The Moor o' Marston'—not Marston Moor, mind you—then shall your eyes watch sharply and your ears be open; for behind those words lies something from Sir Wilfred. More I can't tell you; for I know not what may befall; but you are a shrewd lad, and your mother-wit must tell you what to do."

During those six years many was the time that those transposed words put me on my mettle to serve the king under the very eyes of his enemies. A beggar's supplication at the buttery door—"A morsel o' bread, young master, for the love of God, for one that lost his all on the bloody Moor o' Marston"—meant nothing to the stern-faced Roundheads in hearing; but it was the cause of the message going through the countryside to all that the news should come to, that the king was in sore plight at Chester; and the lad that bore it excited no suspicion.

A gipsy hag that the troopers scourged from the Park with their stirrup-leathers for an idolater and a witch, first read my hand; and as she

told me that my fortunes had been favored where many had been lost—"on the bloody Moor o' Marston"—my senses were alert that I did not drop the small roll of paper that she deftly slipped into my palm.

That paper coming to safe hands meant life to a great nobleman who lay half-starved and wholly lost in a thicket three miles away; and it was the provision which I carried to him and the safe guide I sent him which enabled him to escape and further the business of his royal master. Many an exciting adventure did I have as a result of the messages which came by strange hands, of which that phrase was the warrant; but it was not until the last time it was used that I received an order which carried me far from Renshaw Park.

King Charles was dead at the hands of the executioner and the prisons were full to overflowing with his unfortunate followers awaiting trial, while others were in hiding, awaiting opportunity to escape from the country. Escapes were common from the overcrowded jails. And even the Tower of London, that cursed pile of stones that I was to know so well in days to come, did not hold all of its prisoners secure. Renshaw Park was occupied by a full troop of Ironsides which scoured the country in detachments; for it lay between London and Bristol, and it was reported that many of the Cavaliers were making for the latter port.

The troopers brought many suspected persons to the Hall to be questioned by their captain; and I, in ignorance of my father's fate, was an eager listener at the examinations. It was from William Hasbruck, who, broken by wounds and sickness dragged himself home to die, that I learned that he was lodged in the Tower, accused of high treason; and, a week after this news came, a prisoner of different type from any we had seen was brought in with his hands bound behind his back.

His face, scarred by many wounds, was burned to a copper color by a fiercer sun than ever shone in England, and his clothes looked strangely to me,

who for many years had seen nothing but the sober-colored garments affected by the Puritans. A bright-colored silk handkerchief was bound about his head, and showed under the rusty and battered hat with a bedraggled plume—the only shabby thing about him. A broad sash of the same material was about his waist, the ends formed of huge tassels of silk and gold cord hanging to his knee; his blue velvet jacket was ornamented by four rows of round gold buttons.

"What popinjay have you there, Davy?" asked the captain as the trooper roughly pushed his prisoner into the room where we sat and received a hearty cursing for his rudeness.

"A masterless man, captain; I found him in the Park, watching the house from that thicket yonder, and——"

"Masterless in your throat, you lubber!" broke in the prisoner angrily. "Billy Radburn serves a better man than any psalm-singer, and that's himself when he wills and the man that he and his jolly companions elect to lead them where plunder pays well for the hard knocks."

"Softly, friend; it's more knocks than plunder that you'll get here in England if you keep not a civil tongue in your head," said the captain, and the prisoner turned to him after a sharp glance at me.

"Aye, this is England, sure enough," he grumbled. "A land where a sailor that's cramped his legs aboard ship can't stir twenty miles from Bristol that he's not asked his business by every jack-a-horseback."

"And what may that business be, sir?" asked the captain; and there was that in his eyes and tone that would have made a less bold man than the sailor hesitate.

"To gather brave lads to recruit our company in Tortuga," he answered quickly, the impudence of his bearing no whit lessened. "Broken heads enough there are in this land that was once Merry England; all to decide whether those pates shall be close-cropped or covered with love-locks, and whether you shall be ruled by one man

or many; but what does it all profit? If it's slitting of throats that you would be at, there's many a yellow gizzard to be split on the Spanish Main, and good gold to be won for the labor of it.—What say you, my young cockerel?" he continued, turning to me. "Will you come along o' me and be a gentleman of fortune and join our brotherhood of the coast?"

"Not so fast, friend," said the captain with a grim smile. "Before you ask others to go with you, mayhap it's well they know your destination. Unless you mend your wicked ways there's small doubt of where it will be; and you're like to go there speedily from the end of a rope. Take him away, Davy, and forget not the old saying, 'Safe bind, safe find,' for I'm minded to send the rogue to headquarters tomorrow to tell his tale to the colonel."

"Then curse you for an unmannerly lubber," answered the sailor defiantly. "Never you mind him, young sir; for the rope's not twisted that'll stretch Billy Radburn's neck. Come you with me and I'll tell you tales of the brotherhood that'll suit a brave youngster's ears better than their psalm-singing, and you can tell me in return what's come over this land that I've not set foot on since the year the bloody Moor o' Marston was fought over."

Instantly I was on the alert and my eyes must have shown my eagerness, for the captain, who had always indulged me, gave me a laughing permission to go with the prisoner.

"Aye, Harry lad; tell him what's come to this country which casts out him and the likes of him," he said. "You'll take no harm from his loose tongue, for you're shrewd enough to read him, and you'll soon see to what his manner of life brings him."

The granary of the great stables where the troopers were quartered served as their prison; and into this, a square room lighted by one strongly barred window, Radburn was thrust, his hands still bound. He bore his confinement easily, in spite of the speedy and disagreeable end which the captain had predicted to it, and laughed as he

seated himself on a bench and looked from me to the sentry who paced before the open door, droning through his nose a religious song to while away his watch.

"Ah, it's you and the likes of you that we want for our brave company," said the prisoner jovially as he looked from the sentinel to me. "Not psalm-singing, sour-faced kill-joys that fear to lose their souls if they sing a jolly stave, kiss a pretty lass or drink a flask of wine; but rollicking cavaliers with their sword-points for the men, a kiss for a pretty woman, and the heart for the life of a gentleman of fortune." His talk was as much for the trooper who guarded him as for me; and when the former moved away and turned his back to escape from his ribaldry he looked at me steadily and then at the barred window above his head.

"Listen, lad," he whispered eagerly as the trooper drew out of ear-shot. "You'll be Harry Renshaw, the son of Sir Wilfred?" I nodded, but he restrained any exclamation by a look. "I am to take you to him," he continued rapidly. "Go you at dark to the clump of woods behind the ruined chapel, and you'll find two horses. Get them quietly saddled—their gear lies hidden in the bush beside the west wall—wait there for me and I'll join you in the night."

"But how will you escape from here?" I asked anxiously. "These troopers keep good watch, and bribery will not avail." He grinned at me and glanced up at the barred window.

"Leave that to me, lad. I'll join you, without fail, for no prison holds Billy Radburn when he wants to stretch his legs. But what iron bars can't do, an ounce of lead may; and I'll tell you this in case a bullet stops me. If I am not at the tryst by moonrise, mount and spur for Bristol. Go there to a water-side tavern called the Negro Head, and ask for John Doglar, master of the ship *Maid of Devon*. Tell him that you come from Billy Radburn with news of the Moor o' Marston, and he'll put you in the way to see your father. Can you remember all of this?"

"Aye," I answered in a whisper. "Bristol, the Negro Head, John Doglar of the *Maid of Devon*, and the Moor o' Marston for the password."

"Right!" he said aloud, with a laugh as the sentry came back and looked at us suspiciously. "I've given this young cockerel the course to steer to become a gentleman of fortune; and I wish I had a hundred like him to serve with Lolonois and his brave boys. What say you, old sour-face; will you join our merry company and be sure you know what joy is in this life before you go where water may be scarcer and the climate hotter than in the Dry Tortugas?" The sentry vouchsafed no answer, but moved away again with a grim smile on his face; and, although I longed to learn more from Radburn, I obeyed an imperative gesture from him and left him.

An almost irresistible desire impelled me to go at once to the old chapel and see if the horses were really there; but young as I was my experience had taught me obedience and caution, and it was not until darkness fell and just before the sentries were set about the Hall for the night that I crept cautiously out through the garden without being noticed.

I found the horses tied near the old chapel, a good mile from the house, and the saddles, each with a pair of pistols in the holsters, safely hidden. Never were girths more carefully buckled than by me that night, and I waited impatiently for Radburn until after second cock-crow. I did not sleep and I was specially alert, but I did not hear him until he touched me lightly on the shoulder and without speaking jumped on his horse. I was mounted as soon as he, and expected that he would ask me for guidance; but as surely as if he knew every foot of the ground he led the way through the woodland paths and farm lanes until we came out on the Bristol road, about three miles from the great gateway to Renshaw Park. The moon had risen and the road lay white before us as he put his horse into a long gallop and I pulled up beside him.

"Now lad, we must ride for it," he said, speaking for the first time. "It's thirty miles to Bristol and we must be there by daybreak. Never fear for your horse; they're both good cattle and fresh from a day of rest." I was fair bursting with curiosity to know how Radburn had broken jail, and he laughed when I asked him the question.

"They may be good soldiers, but they are poor warders," he answered. "It was but a landlubber's knot that tied my hands, and play for a sailor to unfasten it."

"Yes, but the barred window and the sentries?" I said. He laughed again.

"Look you, Harry lad; you saw my brave clothes in the daylight—what think you I would least like to lose?"

"Your velvet jacket with the gold buttons," I answered readily, but he shook his head.

"Nay—not but that it's a fair garment to catch the eye of a maid," he said, looking down at it complacently in the moonlight; "but although it's the first thing that would be taken by a thief there's many another to be had where it came from. But lad, this old hat of mine, that a man would be poor indeed if he took the trouble to rob me of it, is worth more to a man that's behind iron bars than all the silk and velvet he could carry on his back." He took it off as he spoke and turning back the leather lining showed me three narrow strips of steel.

"A saw and two files of the finest temper," he said laughing. "Give me my hands free and my old hat for twenty minutes, and the strongest cage in England will not hold Billy Radburn."

"But how about the sentry?" I asked, and the sailor smiled grimly.

"A godly life he led—I trust," he said, "for he's gone to reap the reward of it. I snapped his neck with my bare hands, and while I cut the bars I finished the psalm which I had interrupted, to cover the noise. Faugh! my mouth reeks of it yet, and I would it were safe to cleanse it with a brotherhood snatch." Young as I was, I had

seen much of violence in these troublous times of England and the old oaks of Renshaw Park had borne grisly fruit more than once since Cromwell's men had been quartered there; but for the first time distrust of my companion came over me as I realized that he came but now from a deed that savored to my mind of murder, and that the remembrance of singing the psalm troubled him more than crime or violence. Something of this he must have felt from my manner, for he turned to me seriously.

"Never believe me a villain or a coward, lad. I killed him—yes, and it's not the first man; but Billy Radburn never killed wantonly. The odds were all to him, for I was unarmed; but 'twas his life or mine, for I would have been stretching good hemp to-morrow. It's little I fear death, for we've been close companions many a time; but if it comes by strangling I hope 'twill be by hands in fair fight, and not on a gallows-tree."

In spite of his assurance I was not easy in my mind, and we galloped long in a silence broken only by hoof-beats, until the ring of our horses' shoes on the hard road seemed echoed behind us; and Radburn, after a glance back, loosened the pistols in his holsters and uttered a curse.

"They're after us, lad; for none would urge horses like that on a frozen road except on a blood trail," he said easily. "A stern chase is a long chase; but if they bid fair to overhaul us, do you ride for the Negro Head and leave them to me." He carefully examined the priming of his pistols, and I started to protest.

"Harry, lad, I'm captain on this cruise," he said sharply. "I'm not ordering you to desert me, but to carry out the business we have in hand. More may depend on your coming safe through than you know of; and if we part company it will not be for long. They're gaining on us; and on this bit of straight we should be in sight of each other." He was setting the pace, which he had increased but little since the sound of pursuit came to us; and

ere we had cleared the bit of straight road the troopers gave the view-halloo and one of them fired a pistol.

"A waste of powder and ball," said Radburn contemptuously, "but they've got the heels of us if we keep together. You ride light and can easily win away, but hark to this before you go." I listened eagerly as he slightly increased the pace, the troopers, despite hard spurring, gained less rapidly. "I'll hinder them, Harry lad; but do you ride straight. There are only four, and I'll not be taken; but it's likely I'll have to lie close for a bit; for the alarm will be out. When your business with Sir Wilfred is over, come back by this same road, for there will remain that which we must do together. You'll hear news of me; perhaps from a bird, or mayhap the wind may whisper it to you, but forget not the 'Moor o' Mars-ton.'"

"Will my father not come back with me?" I asked, for I had hoped that his liberation was the object of our journey; but Radburn shook his head.

"He'll be many a league on his way to a fairer land than this ere we come to hand-grips again, Harry lad," he said laughing. "We'll follow him when our business here is over, but now ride on while I pull up on this hilltop and hold parley with these psalm-singing knaves." We were galloping up a long hill, and near its crest he leaned over and offered me his hand; but even as I took it he gave an exclamation more of surprise than pain and I heard a bullet whistle past my head.

"Are you hit?" I asked anxiously, as he tugged a pistol from its holster.

"Yes, curse them!" he exclaimed. "'Tis but a scratch, but Billy Radburn takes not his wounds in the back. Good-by, lad, and ride as if the devil was at your horse's tail." As he spoke he pulled up his horse and faced our pursuers, while I rode alone on the moonlit road for Bristol.

III.

For a few minutes there was a tumult of cries and shots behind me, but my horse soon carried me out of hearing.

It was breaking day when I rode into Bristol and made my way to the Negro Head, a small tavern near the wharves, and for the first time in my life set eyes on the ocean which was to carry me to strange adventures. A sleepy groom took my horse, which was barely able to drag itself to the stables; and when I entered the tavern I found a buxom girl with sleeves carefully tucked up scrubbing the deal boards of the tap-room floor while an older woman of pleasant face interrupted her work of arranging mugs and bottles behind the pewter-covered bar to greet me.

"You ride early, young master," she said. "Is there aught that I can do to serve you?"

"If you can bring me to speech with John Doglar, master of the *Maid of Devon*, I'll be your debtor," I answered. The woman looked at me pityingly, while the maid gave an exclamation and ceased her scrubbing.

"Ah, don't 'ee do it, young sir," she said with a little cry. "You're far too young for that life, an' it would but lead ye to a cruel death. England's not what it was for th' likes o' you, but it's still better than the plantations."

"But, my good woman, I asked only for speech with Master Doglar," I answered. "I know nothing of the plantations, but I was told that I would find him here."

"Aye, he's here," she admitted reluctantly. "Snoring in his bed from his drink of last night; but take the advice of an old woman who's seen many a young man trapped by his promises, and have no dealings with him," she said earnestly, and the maid broke into lamentations.

"Listen to th' mistress, young maister!" she cried dolefully. "It's bad you're ending'll be, an' you go with him. Two years ago went my Jock to make his fortune in his cursed ship an' never th' word have we had of him since. An' here's young Maister Morgan that'll no listen to us, nayther."

"And why should I hearken to every woman that tries to keep a brave lad from his fortune?" said the newcomer. "Faith, my purse is as empty as my

belly this minute, Polly darling; but do you get me something to fill the one, and when Dame Fortune does as much for the other I'll pay you double—and here's the seal to the promise." He slipped his arm around her and the smack of his kiss was quickly followed by the scarce louder smack of the box on the ear; but he laughingly protested it was but a love-tap, and Polly went off to get his breakfast.

And thus I first saw Henry Morgan, with whom I was destined to be true comrade for many years; to share with him privations, hunger and thirst; to win and squander riches; and, in the end, to near share his pitiful death. He was a fine, handsome lad of eighteen, with hair and eyes as black as the raven's wing, a laughing mouth and a swagger which I secretly envied. Broad of shoulder, small about the hips and with well-formed legs, he was the picture of a gay young cavalier, and when I spoke to him he turned to me courteously.

"I'll share my breakfast with you, willingly; but it's your purse is like to pay for it unless our fair hostess there will wait for her pay until I've made my fortune," he said laughing. "Are we to be shipmates, then, that the women were wailing over you?"

"Nay, I am but in the port on business," I answered guardedly, for I knew that my affairs were not to be talked of; but he was so full of his own plans that he scarcely heeded my reticence.

"The more the pity," he said, "for I'm off to-day in the *Maid of Devon*, to make my fortune in the Indies."

"You're more like to leave your bones bleaching there, after the lash has stripped the meat from them," answered the landlady. But Morgan, laughingly protesting that she was jealous because Polly had caught the first kiss, drove her to refuge behind the bar.

"Hark!" he said as the sound of a drum came down the street from the town. "An' I mistake not, here comes the last of our cargo." I followed him to the window and saw approaching a pitiful spectacle. First came the drums

and fifes playing the rogues' march; and then, under a strong escort of foot-soldiers, a group of fifty or sixty tattereddemalions, their rags scarce covering them, and barely able to stagger under the heavy fetters which loaded their arms and legs.

"A rare assortment of gallows-birds," said Morgan jeeringly. "Jack Ketch is spared a hard day's labor by their transportation."

In spite of his size I answered his jeer with a blow, for in the midst of the prisoners, walking erect and with a carriage different from their companions, were half a dozen gentlemen whose only crime was that they had served the king; and among them was my father. In an instant we were at it, tooth and nail, and it was like to have gone hard with me, for he was far the stronger, when a great hand clutched my collar and drew me away, while Mistress Williams and Polly held the arms of Morgan.

"What a little gamecock it is," said my captor, laughing as I turned on him; but I was powerless in his grasp. "It's ill to fight on an empty stomach, lad; and besides, I can't have one of my passengers mishandled."

"He miscalled my——" I exclaimed, caution stopping my tongue before I betrayed my secret in words; but my captor eyed me curiously. He was a larger and more powerful man than Radburn, but his face was burned as black and his dress was very similar, save that four handsome pistols were stuck into his silken sash and a stout cutlas hung from a broad strap over his shoulder.

"What may your name be, my young ruffler?" he asked good-naturedly. When I told him he loosened me and turned to my late antagonist.

"Shake hands, ye lads, and forget the quarrel," he commanded. "His father is among the prisoners, Master Morgan, and I doubt not you spoke unknowingly." Morgan came to me with outstretched hand, and I, in turn, begged pardon for having struck him.

"And now, Master Harry Renshaw, have you naught to say to John Dog-

lar?" asked the man. And he was quick to see that I would speak to him alone, and led me from the room. He gave a low whistle when I told him my news.

"Aye, that's ever Bully Billy's way—always looking for the place where the blows are thickest," he exclaimed. "I can ill spare him with such a rapscallion crew and cargo as I carry, but sail with the tide at eleven I must. And now, young master, for a bite to eat; and then, if you would have speech with your father, you must go on board the *Maid of Devon*."

During our meal I came to a better understanding of Doglar's business, for he told me that he was carrying a gang of prisoners to slavery in the Barbados; felons for the most part, but also a few of the Cavaliers who were respited from the block. I gave a little shiver of horror as I thought of my father in that plight—condemned to a voyage in contact with criminals and to share their slavery at the end of it. But Doglar slapped me cheerily on the back.

"Cheer up, lad; it's not so bad as it sounds, and who knows but what he'll like servitude in that paradise better than freedom in this cold land. There's no returning from the journey they were like to send him; but many a man comes back from the plantations, or stays there prosperous and happy."

"Aye, there's fortunes to be made there," chimed in Morgan eagerly. "You should hear Master Doglar tell of the brave doings against the Spaniards, and the gold and jewels to be gained."

"Have you been there, then?" I asked, and Morgan shook his head.

"Nay, but I go out with Master Doglar. Three years of service do I owe him for the opportunity, and then I'm free to carve my fortunes." As we rowed to the *Maid of Devon*, which was anchored in the stream, he told me that he and a half-dozen others were going to the Barbados as free passengers, indenting themselves for three years of service in the colony to pay for their passage; and that Doglar had

promised to sell them to kind masters. The others were assigned by the governor or sold to the highest bidder; and my heart fell as I realized that it was apt to fare ill with the Cavaliers. But my father's hopefulness was reassuring, when we reached the ship.

"I can give you but a half-hour with the lad, Sir Wilfred," said Doglar, when my father was brought to the deck, his fetters clanking as he climbed the companion-ladder. "Your business has already cost me the service of my mate, Bully Billy Radburn, and I'll not feel easy until we're far enough from shore to avoid answering for what he's done." In that half-hour, during which we were left to ourselves, there was little time for sentiment; and never did a boy of fifteen receive graver counsel and have weightier responsibilities put upon him. From my father I learned that the Royalists on board, as well as many more awaiting transportation in the prisons, were already plotting escape and the raising of insurrection in the far-off Indies.

"There are hundreds of brave spirits there like the messenger I sent you," said Sir Wilfred. "They fight now at their own sweet will with gold as a reward. But once we're free and with our good swords in our hands, we'll give them a nobler cause; and the fight we start there for the Stuarts may be but the beginning of what will put Charles the Second on his throne."

"My son, you're but a lad to undertake such cares and dangers, but you've proved your caution and your shrewdness; and now I must tell you what you must hold in your memory, for it will not do to set it down on paper. If Radburn be at liberty and you can come together, him you may trust; but failing him, wait until another comes to you with our password. And if he say he's come 'to lead you to fortune,' then put your faith in him and follow where he leads. You shall join us, Harry; but first there is much to do in England, and here you must remain to be our trusty messenger." And then he gave me my directions; of papers to be brought from secret places and sent

to Charles Stuart in Holland; of others to be received from strange hands and carried to the exiles in the Barbados. And, last, of hidden money to be gathered for the equipment of a vessel.

"It was meant for the king's service, Harry, and had it reached him he might be alive this day; but now it will serve to further the cause of his son. I know not the amount, but it is great—too great to trust to any but one we know and can rely upon. William Hasbruck knows the secret of it—all that I can tell you is that it lies hid, at Renshaw Park."

"But William Hasbruck was near to death when I saw him last," I exclaimed, and quickly told him the manner of the steward's home-coming.

"Harry lad, you must get that secret if you have to tear him from his grave," said my father fiercely. "It's not alone our liberty that depends upon that money; but the cause of the king, boy. And if you fail us we'll rot in chains, and Charles Stuart will never come to his own."

It was with these words in my ears that I went over the vessel's side and into the shore boat; for the anchor was up and the sailors setting the sails ere he finished speaking. As I was rowed away Henry Morgan shouted a farewell from the vessel's side.

"Kiss Polly for me and say to Mistress Williams that I'll return to pay my reckoning," he called. But there was little echo of his jollity in my heart, and I shouted to him to do what he could for my father. He waved his hand in assent, and the kindness which he showed to Sir Wilfred during that awful voyage was one of the links which bound me strongly to him in later years. The *Maid of Devon* was rapidly drawing from the land when I reached the shore, and a detachment of Commonwealth troopers pulled up their horses on the beach as I stepped from the boat.

"Do you come from that ship?" sharply asked the cornet in command.

I answered that I did.

"Was there a bold-spoken rogue named Radburn went aboard before she

sailed?" he demanded. His question lifted a load from my mind, for it gave me assurance that my friend had not been taken.

"Was he a gaily dressed man with a battered hat and speech that savored——"

"Of the pit of hell, aye, that's the rogue," interrupted the cornet eagerly. "Saw you aught of him?"

"Yes, I saw him," I answered slowly, as I judged that the ship was safe from pursuit. "He was wounded by a pistol-bullet through his shoulder."

"I would it had been through his head," said the cornet savagely. "Three of my good men are dead and another like to die at his hands; and I had promised myself to hang him as high as Haman." And then, when the troopers had ridden off, believing their prey had escaped out of England, I made my way to the Negro Head and slept until next daybreak in the bed which Henry Morgan had left to seek his fortune.

IV.

It was a good fifteen miles from Bristol that Radburn had halted to dispute the road with the troopers, and I found no trace of him until I reached that spot, when a flight of carrion-crows and ravens rose lazily from the roadside ditch where lay the remains of what had been three horses, Radburn's and two others. Signs of a fierce fight were about the place; patches of blood, a broken sword-blade and a battered and dented steel morion; but no trace of the human combatants, and I mounted again and rode slowly on.

The Bristol road was well traveled, and I frequently met groups of disbanded Commonwealth soldiers, and others whose steeple hats cocked jauntily on the side and swaggering manner proclaimed them of the defeated party in spite of their sober garments. It was a band of these latter who hailed me as I passed, asking for news of the shipping at Bristol. After answering I was about to pass on when a half-drunken roisterer in doublet and hose of torn and faded silk with tarnished

trimming of gold lace started a song to an old Cavalier air. It was a cavalry marching-song with indifferent words and indifferently sung; but when he came to the refrain I pulled up my horse, for it was,

On the long Moor o' Marston, oh!

I waited for another verse, and at its end came the same refrain, only with the word "bloody" instead of "long." The singer looked at me meaningfully as he came to it. The song finished, he came toward me and took off his broad-brimmed castor with an elaborate flourish.

"These gallant gentlemen are for over-sea, but I am traveling your way, young sir; and though you go on four legs and I perforce on two, good company makes a long road seem short, and I'll e'en share your company."

"Your songs are like to bring us both in company with the watch-house, friend," I answered as he walked beside my horse. But he looked up at me shrewdly and laughed.

"And yet you liked it, for I saw you stopped to listen," he said. "The son of Sir Wilfred Renshaw should not mislike a Cavalier chorus. Is there perhaps one whom you would like to meet along this road?"

"Aye, there is indeed; know you aught of his whereabouts?" I answered.

"If you can tell me his name, mayhap I can aid you to come to him," he said, looking at me shrewdly. When I told him, he nodded.

"He's waiting for you, lad; but there's more than you who would like to find him, so we must walk cautiously and go under cover of the night. Do you ride slowly to the next cross-road, and then to the left until you come to a small ale-house, and there I'll wait for you." The rendezvous was not an inviting-looking hostelry; a disreputable hedge ale-house which a dilapidated sign proclaimed to be the Jolly Ploughman; but it was apparently doing a thriving business, for a Cavalier drinking-song sung by many voices came from the tap-room; when I had seen

my horse safely stabled I found it filled by a dozen men much like my new-found friend in appearance and dress.

I feared that I should have but a drunken guide by nightfall; for the intervening time was spent in steady drinking and song, but he evidently had a tremendous capacity for strong drink and his legs were steady enough when he led me out into the darkness, a loaf of bread and a cold capon under his rusty cloak, and a flask of wine under either arm. A half-mile from the ale-house we came to a hayrick; and there, stretched out at his ease under the thatch, lay Radburn; but when he tried to sit up to greet me I saw that his left arm was in a sling and that a blood-stained bandage replaced the silken handkerchief about his forehead.

"Aye, lad; it wasn't without hard knocks that I covered your retreat; and but for friend Wildairs here, 'twould have been too much for me. Four to one are no great odds when the four are Spaniards; but these Roundheads are men of a different kidney." He told me of his fight, of how he killed the first trooper and unhorsed the second, and that the other two were beating him down when Wildairs rose from the ditch and coming to his aid turned the tide of battle in his favor, so that but one trooper escaped.

"And a fortunate thing it was for me that you happened to select that spot for your entertainment," remarked Wildairs, as he drew the cork from one of the flasks he had brought. "Faith, we'd drunk so heavily to King Charles that night that when I stumbled into the ditch sleep overcame me; and I would have been frozen if that dead man hadn't pitched head foremost with his cropped pate fair in the small of my back."

"Aye, if drinking his health will bring Bonny Charley to his own again, you and your companions at the Jolly Ploughman will deserve well of him," said Radburn laughing. "But now, lad, what of your business?" It was long past midnight ere we had exchanged our news and settled on our plans; and sleep was heavy on my lids when Rad-

burn shook me in the morning. Many sleepless nights I was to know in the next three months; but the tale of my life during that time would be but a history of all the ineffectual plots hatched in England to restore Charles Stuart. For, boy that I was, my father's name and instructions took me into all of them.

Sometimes Radburn and I were together; for although he professed small interest in the king or the Parliament he was faithful to his promises; and it was not until all that had been left me to do was accomplished that he grew restive. No suspicion of collusion in his escape had attached to me at Renshaw Hall, and I returned there safely and accomplished my business, but none too soon, for William Hasbruck lived but long enough to tell me his secret. The estate had been sequestered and purchased for a song by one of Cromwell's favorites, a sanctimonious hypocrite who sourly bade me be gone from the house which Renshaws had ruled for more than four hundred years. I felt that there was nothing left to hold me in England.

Wildairs, broken Cavalier, ale-house roisterer and ne'er-do-well, had attached himself firmly to Radburn, who made use of him as he saw fit, caroused with him when he had nothing more serious on hand, and paid the reckoning for both with a generous hand. My work finished I met them at the Negro Head, the sailor in soberer garments playing the part of a shipmaster out of employment, and Wildairs an established favorite with Mistress Williams and the buxom Polly. But there was no further time for idleness. Radburn, in pursuance of Sir Wilfred's plan, purchased a vessel and fitted it out, while I acted as paymaster from the fund which Hasbruck had secreted.

Wildairs entertained me and always had some piece of amusement to propose; but never did time seem longer than the six weeks which that equipment required. Radburn laughed at my impatience while he saw to the purchase and stowage of stores, arms and ammunition, and carefully selected his

crew. Hundreds of broken men besieged him for a passage, for the years of civil war in England had brought want and ruin to many a family which had lived on the fat of the land; and every hammock on the ship could have been filled a hundred times.

My heart misgave me when I saw the drunken, disreputable assortment which finally put off in the boats to the good ship *Hopeful* which lay in the stream; and Radburn eyed them grimly ere we turned to say good-by to Mistress Williams and Polly, who had walked with us to the beach. But once the anchor was up and the sails set he did not handle lightly, and discipline as strict as ever ruled an Ironside regiment settled on that ship under his heavy hand before we were in blue water. And thus, with Radburn and Wildairs for companions, I set sail from the troubled land of England, fated not to see it again until the name of Cromwell was but a memory and Charles the Second sat on the throne.

Radburn at sea was a different man from the roisterer I had known on shore; and had I been older and more experienced in the world, I might not have trusted him so freely. Brave to the point of recklessness I knew him to be, but on his own confession he had been for many years a "gentleman of fortune," which translated meant a pirate; his hand against all men save his chosen companions, and whenever occasion offered in other men's pockets.

And with full knowledge of his past life I had—by Sir Wilfred's express command, it is true—placed a well-found ship, eminently suited to piratical enterprise and manned by a crew of his own choosing, at his disposal; while stowed in the cabin was a considerable sum in gold which he might take without saying as much as by your leave. Faithfully and truly had he served the hopeless cause of the Stuarts while we were together in England, risking his life as readily as the most devoted Cavalier; but he never made pretense that his heart was in the work.

"Look you, Harry lad," he said to me one night when we lay hid in a loft

from a searching-party of Cromwell's soldiers with enough Royalist correspondence on us to earn us each a hempen collar. "Billy Radburn's word is pledged to Sir Wilfred to see the end of these matters, but I would that we were well away from the dreary land of England. I care not a whit who rules it—Roundhead or Cavalier, Old Noll or Bonny Prince Charley—once our anchor is apeak and our sails spread, for in the Indies we know neither King nor Protector.

"The spell of the Spice Islands is on me, boy, and when you've fallen under it you'll care no more than I for England; but Billy Radburn holds fast to his word and will see this through—and then for the Spanish Main! You're young, lad, but you'll go far and rise high, and I'll ask you not to forget that in this I served faithfully. Learn to rule yourself, dear lad, for in days to come you'll lead others. And no man in all our jolly company is strong enough to keep the captaincy. For there's just one man he can't restrain, and that's himself."

This talk came back to me ere we were two weeks at sea, for Radburn's behavior underwent a great change. So long as the crew was to be disciplined and brought in order, he was an ideal captain, harsh in his methods but just; but when that task was over he gave himself up to swinish indulgence, and his just severity grew into unnecessary harshness and cruelty, until there were mutterings and black looks from the crew. He did not care; but I, knowing how much depended on our venture, was alarmed; and Wildairs, reckless and easy-going as he was, shared my anxiety. We remonstrated with Radburn, who spent most of his time in drinking and carousing.

"Aye, and why shouldn't I?" he answered to our remonstrance. "For half a year I've been in England, its fog and damp getting into the marrow of my bones, and never daring to get decently drunk at night for fear I'd come sober in the morning with a hempen tie about my neck. Never fear for me, bully boys; drunk or sober I'll bring

you safe and sound to Barbados and then to Tortuga."

"You're more like to get our throats cut by your rascally crew," said Wildairs, and Radburn laughed derisively.

"They're mild as sucking doves," he exclaimed. "Wait till I've blooded them against a Spanish galleon, and they've seen the scuppers run red, and fingered the yellow gold, and they'll be raging devils, not to bind nor to hold. But let a man so much as whisper until he's earned the right by fighting, and I'll hang him by his thumbs until they pull out of the sockets."

"And Billy Radburn's plighted word to Sir Wilfred Renshaw—what of that?" I asked sternly. "How can you answer for your command over the crew, and you give up your body to the power of the wine-flask?" And with that I seized the bottle from his hand and threw it to the floor. Radburn started from his seat, his face convulsed with passion, and drew a pistol from his sash. But Wildairs promptly knocked it from his hand, and the sailor sank back on his locker and laughed contemptuously.

"Aye, Harry lad, you're right!" he exclaimed. "A better follower than Billy Radburn never sailed the ocean nor stood behind his leader when swords were out on land; but he that can't rule himself must e'en be ruled. The sailing-master of this ship I'll be—for you know naught of navigation. But Harry Renshaw shall be captain, and here's my hand on it."

I was taken aback by his ready submission, but Radburn was true to his word—he knew his own limitations. Never did a leader have more faithful follower than he was to me for many years to come—wise in his counsels, ever ready to risk his life at a word, and faithful to his salt in all things.

"Many's the fair venture that I've seen come to naught in these seas for want of a proper leader," he said to me that night as we paced the deck together. "No man doubts the courage of Billy Radburn, and I'm as great a coward as any man in our jolly company. But though we fight so long as

we can stand against an enemy with arms in his hand, the foe that we take into our mouth breeds dissension among ourselves. Harry lad, these ten finger-bones have handled gold enough for a king's ransom; many's the time I've come back from a cruise with more gold than a man could carry as my share, and now where is it? Ask the harpies and leeches at Tortuga, lad; but it's like that you'll see for yourself how the jolly gentleman of fortune squander in a week the price of a half-year's plundering."

"Easy come by, easy go," I said, laughing, and Radburn looked at me curiously.

"Aye, easy come by, if you call it so. The fighting's not bad; though often the odds are ten to one and more; and the butcher's bill's a heavy one before the plunder is shared; but wait until you've been rolling for half an eternity on an oily sea, a brazen sun blistering you by day and a pitiless moon mocking you by night, your blackened tongue hanging from your mouth with thirst, and not a capful of wind for a week at a time.

"Wait until you've marched day after day through jungle, your skin tormented by insects, your bones racked by fever, with death following close at your heels if you fall out of ranks, and worse than death ahead of you unless the venture wins. Wait until you've seen this, Harry lad, and then I'll ask you if you think the plunder's easy come by."

"These are incidents in the life of a gentleman of fortune that you did not dwell on when you asked me to 'list in the brotherhood,'" I answered banteringly, and Radburn shook his head.

"And why should I, when they are things which can be avoided?" he said. "Think you I care a snap of my fingers for the cause of the king or the men who fought for it? We need not the swords of the Cavaliers, for there are men in the brotherhood who can handle steel better than any long-haired gallant that ever drank the king's health. Blood of the bluest is in our ranks; you'll meet there nobles of a

dozen kingdoms; but they are broken men, broken by their own weakness. Men like Sir Wilfred, who have come down in the world because the times are out of joint and not because they threw away their chances, are what we want; and that's why Billy Radburn went to England to look for them.

"Men that can lead, men that have strength to rule the brave adventurers who follow them against the enemy, and protect them against themselves when fighting's not the business of the moment. Aye, Harry lad, Old Noll himself had been my choice could I have had him; only give us a leader like him, and we'll have an empire greater than the one he's stolen. There'll be no more stories of well-found ships putting to sea to have their crews perish from hunger and thirst from their own imprudence, or to founder because all hands are drunk in the scuppers. You have the makings of it, Harry, and I'll set you on the way."

From that time on, save in matters of navigation, which I was learning, I, a boy of sixteen, was in command of the ship and its wild crew; I was guided by the counsels of Radburn, who set the example of obedience to my orders. Many times when I would have been lenient I became severe by his advice, and more than once punishment was stayed at his suggestion. I had no opportunity to distinguish myself against an enemy, for the voyage was peaceful; but it was an education for me in that it taught me to rule men. And when our anchor dropped in Barbados I commanded a well-disciplined and contented ship's company.

V.

The island of Barbados as our ship approached it recalled the prediction of Master Doglar that the exiles would find slavery there preferable to liberty in England; for never did a fairer sight gladden eyes which for many weeks had beheld only the monotony of blue sky and bluer water. The graceful palm-trees waving in the trade-wind, the dark-green tropical verdure of the hills

and the brighter hue of the patches of cultivated land surrounding the great galleried manor-houses and their adjoining whitewashed quarters for the slaves made it seem a paradise to us whose days had been passed in sunless England. It was not until our good ship had glided into the harbor and our anchor was down that we realized that while it might be a paradise for the few it was a living hell for the many; for the curse of a harsh slavery lay over the fair land.

A ship of twice our tonnage, arrived two days before from London, lay at anchor; and her living cargo of felons, political exiles and indentured laborers who had voluntarily sold themselves into temporary slavery, was being herded into the shore boats alongside with blows and curses from the crew and their new owners from the plantations. I was heart-sick as I watched them, for I knew that six months earlier my father had formed one of just such a cargo, and my knowledge of him told me that under like treatment he would have rebelled. A patrol-boat carrying a score of heavily armed soldiers convinced me that rebellion could have had but one ending; and I waited impatiently while a boat was lowered that I might go ashore and learn his fate.

"Lad, it's not a good sight to see Englishmen so handled," said Radburn as he joined me at the rail. "More than one of that scarecrow crew has fallen from high place in the land which casts them out to feed the land-crabs of the Indies. Do you wonder that the brotherhood ranks are filled when the choice is such a life of slavery or one of fair fight and gallant adventure?"

"I would fain believe that Master Doglar had more mercy," I answered, as we saw the captain of the slave-ship boot a poor wretch who was so weak from the scurvy and the short rations of the long voyage that he lagged behind his fellows.

"You are thinking of your father, lad; but never fear for him," answered Radburn consolingly. "The heavy hand is needed with that crew of thieves and

cutpurses, the sweepings of the stews and kennels of London town; but John Doglar knows a man. Look you at the convict who is walking to the gangway now. Chains on his wrists he has, as well as leg-irons; but I'll warrant that he's no gallows-bird; and it would be but a fool who would rouse him."

Indeed, the man to whom he pointed was of a different stamp from the cringing wretches who had preceded him. Tall and straight, erect in spite of the burden of heavy fetters, he was a man apart. And as he paused for a moment, enjoying the sunshine after weeks of dreary confinement 'tween decks, the dark curls which blew about his head proclaimed that he was no follower of the Lord Protector. With a curse the shipmaster ordered him into the waiting boat; but the convict paid no attention until a great fist was raised threateningly to enforce the order. That blow never fell, nor did the ship captain ever give another; for with a cry of rage the convict raised his hands as if to protect himself; but the heavy links descended on the forehead of the seaman, crushing his skull as if it were an egg-shell.

"Did I not say it would be a fool who would rouse him?" exclaimed Radburn. "A fool he was, and paid the penalty of folly; but it's but an ill end that the other poor devil will come to." The convict had dashed toward the rail after giving the blow, as if he would jump into the sea; but the crew and slave-drivers fell on him, beating him to the deck with cudgels and capstan-bars, and overpowering him by sheer weight of numbers. My blood boiled at the sight and I jumped into our boat, calling for volunteers to go to his rescue. Wildairs was quickly at my side, but with a few stern words Radburn bade the extra men stand back, and dropping into the stern-sheets seized the tiller-ropes and headed the boat for the shore.

"Be quiet lad, or I'll throw you overboard to cool your hot head," he said sternly when I turned on him. "No man has greater appetite for fighting than Billy Radburn; but now we are

not our own masters. Your Cavalier is a prisoner; but they'll not harm him now. Take my word for that, for you know not slavery in the Indies."

"But they *will* kill him!" I protested; and Wildairs, loosening his rapier, seemed about to side with me when Radburn quickly drew a pistol from his belt.

"Aye, they'll kill him; but not now, unless we interfere to save him, when we'll be like to share his fate," he answered, nodding toward the patrol-boat which had drawn alongside the slave-ship. "The blow of a slave brings death; but not so easily. On the great parade of the town he'll die, caged in hoops of iron which hang from a high gibbet that all slaves may see. If you would wish him well, pray that he dies now; but confine your help to prayers, for until we have speech with Sir Wilfred I'll pistol the first man, were it his own son, who strikes a blow in any cause save that we sail in."

And so I, a lad of sixteen, made first acquaintance with the Indies, which I had pictured as a place for gallant adventure against the Spaniard; a place where honor and glory was to be won and where the divine right of Charles Stuart to rule England was to be maintained by force of arms. Cruelty, torture and oppression replaced the open and fair fighting of England, and Englishmen oppressed their brothers whom the fortune of war had delivered to them as bondmen. Instinctively I dreaded to put foot on the white coral sand where a group of the planters and merchants of the colony awaited us; for it seemed a place of ill omen in spite of its fair appearance. Radburn jumped out first, warmly greeted by many old acquaintances eager for the news from England, and hopeful that we brought more convicts to labor under the lash to enrich them.

"Nay, but I think that you have already robbed England's gallows of most of its fruit," he answered laughing. "Has not John Doglar with his cargo from the *Maid of Devon* filled your wants?"

"'Twas but a mangy lot he brought,"

answered a burly planter over whose head a black slave held a shade of plaited palm-leaves to shield him from the sun. "Fine finnickin' gentlemen, with hands more fitted to hold a court sword than a cane-knife. Twenty of them I had, and a poor bargain I made of it."

"Then mayhap I can relieve you of it," said Radburn, motioning to me to hold my peace. "Swordsmen we want; not craven convicts. Had you the Cavaliers?"

"Aye, to my sorrow, and having had them I would now have the other variety of gallows-bird," grumbled the planter. "The king's men and an unwhipped cub named Morgan did I buy from Master Doglar; and faith, my barbecue was like the king's antechamber with its 'by your leave,' and 'may it please you.' And then, when I did but order forty lashes to one of them named Renshaw, who was but a lazy dog, they triced up my overseer who would have given them, and young Morgan laid the lash lustily on his back. They threatened to hang me by the heels over my own sugar caldron, and after helping themselves to what they wanted from my stores ran off to the woods, carrying a dozen of my blacks to wait upon them. Heard you ever the like of that?"

"Aye, and you fared better than the master of yon London ship, Master Salter," answered Radburn, looking out over the harbor where the patrol-boat was slowly approaching the shore. "Fool that he was, he too would strike a man of like kidney to your Cavaliers, and so he died. There is his slayer, bound and helpless in the hands of the soldiers."

"And a fine example he shall make for these disaffected rogues!" exclaimed the planter savagely, while a buzz of excitement spread through the group of men at our news. "Cavalier or criminal, it's all one when they come to Barbados in chains; and I would I had my own runaways as securely to hang in cages by his side." He was a coarse-featured, oily brute, and I could have struck him for his words; but Rad-

burn held me fast by the arm, reminding me by the painful pressure of his fingers that we were searchers for information, and that our quest would not be furthered by violence. Wildairs, who for the landing had arrayed himself in a gay doublet of satin, a castor with a brave plume, and a gold-laced cloak as fine as if he had been going to court, had listened with curling lip to his speech, and stepping forward looked him full in the eye.

"We think alike, good Master Salter," he said quietly, his left hand resting lightly on the basket-hilt of his rapier. "That which does not please us we would remedy. So, as the shape of your nose does not please me, I'll e'en change it." His right hand shot out, and grasping the bulbous nose of the planter between finger and thumb he tweaked it until tears came to its owner's bleary eyes. Springing back he whipped out his rapier and stood on guard, his eyes flashing, his white teeth showing between lips which parted in a smile of contempt, and his face pale with anger.

"Now that I have made it more to my liking, I'll willingly dance a measure on the white sand with you, if you'll but stop your infernal bawling and draw your hanger," he said with mock courtesy to the planter, who was bellowing more from pain than rage; but Radburn quickly interposed and sternly bade him sheath his weapon.

"A free man you've come to Barbados, but remember that I'm your captain; and it's in irons you're like to leave it if you cross me," he said as Wildairs sullenly obeyed, apparently much to the planter's relief. "Are you both mad that you would peril the success of our venture because rough justice is meted out to a man you have never seen before. Nay, friend, let your cutlas rest," he continued, turning to the planter, who now that danger of conflict seemed over was making a great show of lugging his useless hanger from its scabbard. "Satisfaction you shall have if you wish it, e'en though I give it to you myself; but not until my business is completed."

There was a murmur of resentment from the crowd, which was angered at any suggestion of mercy to a rebellious slave; but there was that in the manner of Radburn which cowed them, and within call was our lusty boat's crew, armed to the teeth. The landing of the soldiers with their prisoner, whose broken pate and bloody clothing bore evidence that he had already been severely dealt with, distracted their attention, and Radburn quietly drew us aside, cursing us roundly for a pair of mutinous hot-heads.

"If I did not love you both the boatswain's cat would make acquaintance with your backs," he said savagely. "'Blood for blood' is our law, comrades; but 'One for all' comes first. Now to find Sir Wilfred; and then I'll guarantee you all the pretty sword-play you wish to see; but it will not be against greasy, yam-faced planters. Ho there, Manuel! Come and drink a flask with us and tell us of Tortuga." His hail was to a swarthy-faced, black-eyed man, dressed in much the same costume that Radburn had worn when first I saw him; but the gold buttons were lacking from his jacket, and its lace was frayed and tarnished.

"A dozen flasks if you like, if you have the gold to pay for them, for I'm fair sickened of raw rum," answered the newcomer as he swaggered toward us, extending his hand in welcome. "You come in good time, *amigo*; the last of my pieces-of-eight is gone, and my credit like to follow while I waited for you."

"You are here to meet me—you have news?" asked Radburn eagerly, and Manuel laughed.

"Aye, there's more than me waiting for you and what you bring," he answered. "Lolonois has great plans for a venture to the Main, and waits only for the powder and shot which you carry. News I had from Doglar of your coming, and the adventurers are powdering beef and cleaning ship at Tortuga. The land-crabs of Barbados have stripped me clean while I waited; and had you delayed another day I must have taken to the camp of the,

runaways in the woods to keep from being sold for my tavern-bill."

"That I'll settle for you and welcome," answered Radburn, his eyes sparkling at the news. "There's plenty to be had for the asking, where we go with Lolonois; but what of those who came with Doglar?" And while we drank our wine on the tavern-porch Manuel told us of Doglar's arrival after a disastrous voyage, with half his cargo dead with the fever which they had brought from the crowded jails of England. The Cavaliers and the indentured men had been landed first and purchased by the planter Salter, whose nose Wildairs had tweaked.

"He's no worse than the others, but men die like flies in the cane-fields and boiling-house; and work they must have from them first, or there'll be no *mus-cavado* to ship to England," he continued. "The talk is that, sir. Wilfred guaranteed repayment for all his outlay and to purchase their freedom if they were left in peace; but Salter jeered him for an impudent rogue and ordered him the lash. They flogged him soundly and left the plantation, promising to crop his ears as close as his hair if he dared to follow."

"And where are they now?" I asked eagerly, and Manuel pointed to the wooded hills.

"There away; not so far but what they have seen your ship, young cockerel," he answered. "To-night, if three lights are shown from the masthead they will come on board; and then it's best that you sail for Tortuga. Word has reached here that a regiment of Cromwell's men are sailing for the Barbados; and it's seant mercy they will have on rebel slaves who fought for the king."

"Then here's an end to our bout, for it's time we shipped our water and fresh stores!" exclaimed Radburn, looking regretfully at the wine-flasks as he called for the score. "No man would better like to drink a dozen bottles of this good wine than Billy Radburn; and when Old Noll's lambs are abroad it's time for honest men to move. How many men have you for us, Manuel?"

"Twelve of the old brotherhood, a half-dozen fledglings, and there are eight with Sir Wilfred," he answered after he had drained the last of his flagon. "We might even try some small venture here before we sail."

"Aye, blast you for a Portagee!" answered Radburn laughing. "You'd close the English ports against us for a song."

"And when we hold St. Catherine's, what more do we want?" asked Manuel, holding each bottle to the light to assure himself that nothing was being wasted. "The ports of the Main are always open to us, and I'd fain drink another flagon to our speedy visit to 'em." That Radburn resisted the temptation showed me how urgent he felt the need for our departure; for he resolutely turned away and led us toward the beach. As we passed through the square in front of the barracks we saw two smiths at work, and paused to watch them, for they were shaping iron hoops into the form of a man.

"It's like they'll need to stretch it a bit for their new prisoner; for he's a fine figure of a man to hang up for the crows to peck at," said Manuel indifferently; and in answer to my eager questioning he told me that they prepared this devilish torture for the convict who had that morning killed the shipmaster. In a country where the slaves outnumbered the free men twenty to one there could be no temporizing with rebellion; and a blow received the same inevitable punishment. The offender was encased in straps of iron which held him like a vise, and the cage was suspended from a gibbet on the parade-ground until thirst and hunger ended the victim's sufferings.

The memory of the prisoner as I had seen him on the deck that morning came back to me, and I was sick at heart that Radburn had prevented our attempt at rescue; but now that the attempt seemed hopeless I longed only to escape from the sight of it, little dreaming that I should myself come to see worse things done; aye, and to glory in them; and that I should one day envy the fate of the man I pitied.

VI.

There was savage grumbling from the crew when they found that instead of a run and riot on shore, hard work at cask-filling and boat-pulling was to be done under a blistering sun; but Radburn with biting tongue and heavy hand drove them to it, so that ere night-fall we were fairly provisioned. Manuel's recruits, loud-swearing, swaggering bullies, joined eagerly in the work, showing the aptitude of trained hands and the discipline of united effort; for while many of them were greeted by Radburn as old comrades and hailed him in turn with easy familiarity, at the work in hand they recognized his authority and carried out his orders to the letter.

Strange men they were, with faces bronzed by sun and wind and lined no less deeply from dissipation than by wounds; representing half the countries of Europe in speech and dress, but all alike in that they were in tarnished finery. Their jewels and buttons of gold had long since gone to pay for their riotous pleasures, and many a velvet doublet and cloak was roughly patched with coarser stuff; but no pang of hunger or thirst had tempted any one of them to part with the tools of his trade; and bright cutlases and well-oiled pistols, many of hem worth a knight's ransom from their jeweled handles, hung from their heavy leather belts or were stuck in their ragged and frayed silken sashes. It was a strange picture for the eyes of an English lad to see at this first landfall we made since the green shores of Ireland faded into the horizon.

All races and peoples seemed to have gathered in this far-off island of the tropics, and Africans black as ebony, fair-skinned Englishmen, swarthy Spaniards, copper-hued Indians and handsome, tawny Caribs labored side by side under the guard of heavily armed taskmasters in the slave-gangs. The spell of the tropics was on them all, and only the fear of the lash hurried their lagging foot-steps; and ere that first day was over I realized that I was in

a new world; the whistle of a whip, its sickening thud as it cut through the skin of some poor wretch's bare back, and the answering wail of agony seemed but an ordinary thing to me, a lad who had been reared in softer surroundings.

If a single day could so change me, it was not to be wondered at that in the fierce, bearded and ragged ruffians who clambered up the ship's side soon after darkness fell I could scarce recognize my father and his companions, gentlemen who in kindlier days had graced a monarch's court. A long voyage in the enforced companionship of the offscourings of England, the brand of slavery and the predatory life in the jungle had shorn from them many of the airs and graces of the courtier; while that tropic sun, in whose construction the devil surely had a hand, had raised strange passions in their breasts and shriveled mercy and softness to an unrecognizable thing.

The burden which they brought with them and threw with careless hands clattering to the deck would make one think that chivalry had called them to the aid of the oppressed; for it was the cage we had seen fashioned by the smiths that day and contained the senseless form of a man; but 'twas small store they set by it, though loud they boasted of the fact that they had but taken it from the gibbet to spite the vengeance of those who had sought to wrong them.

There was little of tenderness in my father's greeting to me. Sharp, curt questioning as to how I had carried out the matters entrusted to me in England and a word of commendation for my fidelity. He then turned from me to examine by the light of a ship's lantern the packet of papers, which through all that long voyage I had carried under my doublet. His companions were questioning Radburn and Wildairs for news of happenings in England; and I, whose youthful shoulders for many months had borne a burden of care and anxiety which might well have bowed those of an older man, felt strangely lonesome and of small account now

that all which had been laid upon me to do had been accomplished. And then came into my life that friendship which was to continue for many years; for while I stood unconsidered, as if in their counsels there was no place for me, a friendly hand fell on my shoulder and a laughing voice bade me welcome to the Indies.

It was Henry Morgan, but so changed that I could scarce believe that he was the same stripling who six months earlier had so light-heartedly set sail from Avonmouth in the *Maid of Devon*. In a climate where most men degenerate physically and mentally he had thriven; his slender figure in the work of the plantation and the rough life of the jungle had developed until in strength and stature he was a man, and the set of the chin under the laughing lips, the bold gaze of the determined eyes and the proud poise of his shapely head proclaimed that he had made his place among these men who had led armies and counseled a king.

Eagerly he told me of their voyage, their servitude and quick rebellion; of their rough bivouac in the jungle and their forays for food and clothing on the hamlets and plantations of the colony. Not one word cared he to hear of England; for he thought only of the adventure before him and the chance to carve his fortune with the heavy cutlas which hung from his hip; and I had small chance to speak until a cry from my father interrupted his chatter.

"Here's news, indeed, gentlemen all," he proclaimed as we gathered round him on the deck. "Prince Rupert writes that he himself will come to share our fortunes. He sails from London, where he has lain concealed, to meet us and raise the standard of the king."

"It's more like that he'll be raised on a gibbet," interposed Radburn bluntly. "Hark you, Sir Wilfred; news of all this must have come to the ears of Old Noll, for one of his regiments is now on ship for Barbados. It's small mercy we can expect if our ship is at anchor when they come, an' it's small liking I have to sun-dry on a gibbet. Our

bargain was to bring the ship for you and your comrades, and then for the Tortuga; and before the sun rise we must be outside the harbor heads."

"And here we wait for Rupert, if Cromwell and all his Ironsides come," answered my father obstinately. "Fall back, you men, for this we must hold counsel on." For a moment it seemed that there would be open conflict; for the adventurers cared little for cause or prince, and were eager to replenish their empty purses by immediate departure to join Lolonois at Tortuga. With Radburn and Manuel at their head they formed in the waist, while Sir Wilfred and his comrades drew together, resolved to keep the ship at anchor. A word and swords would have been out; but that word was never spoken.

The light of the lantern fell on the face of the iron-bound prisoner whom they had rescued in jest; and with a cry of surprise and relief Wildairs fell on his knees beside him.

"Sir Wilfred! Radburn! It is the prince himself whom you have brought! Faith, I should have known him from the blow he struck this morning, had I not believed that he was serving against the Turks in Hungary."

And so the cloud blew over and each party had its way; for with the prince on board there was no longer reason for delay, and sunrise found us on our course for Tortuga to join the brotherhood of the coast. As he told us when speech came to him, he had paid his passage, under a humble name; but the shipmaster, as soon as they were out of sight of land, had clapped him in irons with intent to sell him as a slave.

Surely none of the nobles or gentry of England made stranger companionship during their years of exile than that to which Prince Rupert and my father came. Broken men from every kingdom of Europe had flocked to that small island of Tortuga, which was the rendezvous for the buccaneers; and in the brotherhood which they formed all were equal; and no name, however powerful in Europe, could gain its

owner precedence. Lolonois, who for the moment was their chief, was a Frenchman of mean extraction; but in his expedition against Maracaibo two years before he had led his men so skillfully and the plunder had been so great that recruits had flocked to his standard.

But once the men were landed at Tortuga his authority ceased, and each was again his own master until new articles of confederation had been signed. Their plunder, great as it had been, was quickly dissipated and squandered; for others than those who fight had flocked to Tortuga to batten on them; and bold-faced women trailed gowns of priceless satins and velvets through the dirty streets of the town, while the rattle of dice in the drinking-places could be heard through every hour of the twenty-four.

Keen-eyed Jews drove good bargains for the jewels, and plate which had been won by the sword and of which the ignorant buccaneers knew not the value; and many a poor devil had squandered or been cheated of the fruits of a half year's cruise in a single night of debauchery. The cargo of many a Spanish galleon was brought into that harbor; and silks and laces meant for wives and daughters of the grandees of Spain decked out the sweethearts of the buccaneers; while gold and jewels for which the Spaniards had tortured the unfortunate Indians were wrested from them to be gambled away in the hells of Tortuga.

"Look you, gentlemen all; as I have agreed, I have brought you safe to Tortuga," said Radburn as the rocky heights of the island gradually rose above the horizon. "Names have you made in England, but you come to a place where English names are forgotten; and in the brotherhood one must earn his right to lead. That Lolonois has led us well, and that through him we have gained much treasure and lost but few men makes it certain that he will be chosen admiral for our next venture. Much you shall see that will be strange to English eyes; for south of the line Europe and its ways are but a memory. If you will take my advice,

I counsel that you be wary of speech and chary of interference until our first venture gives you full brotherhood. That you, my prince, and you, Sir Wilfred, should come to lead us is my hope; but first you must prove the right to lead by force of arms."

It was hard counsel for the Cavaliers to listen to; but on landing they felt its justice, and well would it have been for them had they never forgotten that the ways of Europe were unknown. The buccaneers, men who had forgotten that they had ever known loyalty to country, were in truth a lawless lot. So long as Spaniards gathered the untold riches of the mines, fisheries and plantations of the countries of the Main, so long might gold be had by fighting to squander on the only pleasures which they knew; and it was naught they cared whether King Charles or Cromwell ruled the England which they never wished to see again. Among them were many French, Germans and Hollanders; but in Tortuga none spoke of the home he had left.

Gathered in the harbor were a half-dozen ships; three with which Lolonois had sailed to Maracaibo and back, a Spanish carack captured some two months earlier by a handful of the buccaneers who had put to sea in an open canoe and taken it in spite of overwhelming odds, and two which had come from piracies in the South Seas, under command of an Englishman named Mansfelt. Our own arrival was welcomed because of the store of powder which we carried; and Lolonois himself came on board as our anchor dropped, to propose that we should join his fleet.

A great store of salted meat had been provided for the voyage, and every ship was fully provisioned and manned; in fact, so far had the fame of Lolonois gone as a leader that many more were in the town that he could find room for on his ships. In the great council, in which every man had a vote, it was decided that the fleet should sail for St. Jago de Leon, which is in Nicaragua and where great store of plate was gathered for shipment to Spain. And

so, we having all been made brothers of the society, we set out under the command of Lolonois, some seven hundred men in seven ships. Of our own crew but few remained with us.

In the debauchery of the town before we sailed many who were unaccustomed to the climate and the food had fallen sick and were left behind to await our return; but their places were filled with the buccaneers, and it was but a poor exchange we found it. Of discipline there was none; for save when fighting was at hand each man was his own master and spent his time in gaming and drinking, leaving the ship to be worked by the black slaves. Prince Rupert and the Cavaliers would have enforced respect and order; but Radburn counseled delay, and minded us that we had signed the articles of agreement.

So great was the waste of good provision that we had been not a fortnight at sea before our stores were perilously low, and no other ship was in better plight. And then a calm in the accursed Gulf of Honduras reduced us to such extremity that we must fain make for the nearest land to refill our water-casks and stores. 'Twas here that dissensions sprang up between the leaders, for Rupert and my father would have protected the Indians, thinking to make them useful allies, but Lolonois, who I, believe had become mad, visited upon them the most terrible cruelty. And when we took a Spanish ship, being disappointed that we found no treasure in her, with his own hand he murdered the ninety poor wretches who composed her crew.

And so, under the command of a madman the brotherhood of the coast came to an end. The town of Puerto Cavalo we took, but even the shrewd torturing of the buccaneers could not make the miserable inhabitants give up that which they had never possessed; and the Cavaliers, who had thought that pieces-of-eight were to be had for the asking, sickened at the paltriness of the treasure.

St. Jago had been warned of our coming, and we knew that we should

be warmly received; but Lolonois would listen to no counsel to change our plans. Mansfelt with his two ships left us to intercept a plate ship of which we had found news in the galleon which we took at Puerto Cavalo; and Lolonois, in what I believe to have been drunken madness, swore that he would have no more such soft-hearted knaves as the Cavaliers in his following, and sailed to attempt St. Jago. Certain news we never had of him; but many years afterward when I was again in those parts I learned that a ship had been wrecked upon the coast of Darien, and that the survivors had perished in miserable slavery to the Indians.

Of the misfortunes and final success of our further cruise I would say little; for the story has been so often told in Port Royal that it is known to all men. It was a wild venture which we attempted with a single ship, and one which might well have daunted an armada; for we set out to take the strongly walled and garrisoned town of Cartagena. Had the advice of Radburn, who had helped to carry many as desperate a venture to success, been heeded we e'en might have won; but Prince Rupert despised the craft of the buccaneers, which set great store by surprises; and we must enter the harbor in broad daylight with banners flying, and so the good ship was sunk by the battery at Boca Chica, and we had much ado to escape to the shore in our boats. That we took the battery and put the gunners who would take no quarter to the sword was small help; for the garrison from the town attacked us so determinedly that we were again driven out and by sheer force of numbers overwhelmed.

Little of that fight under the fierce tropic sun do I remember; for I was early felled by a blow from the clubbed musket of a Spanish soldier, and when I again opened my eyes it was night. I was in a canoe on the Magdalena River, my companions Prince Rupert, Radburn, Morgan and a score of the buccaneers; and no one of all that company was without many bad wounds. It was to the sound of altercation that

I awoke, the harsh voice of Radburn ringing in my ears.

"And I say, Prince Rupert, that we will not follow you to certain destruction," he declared angrily. "All that men can do we have done, but if you would fight a stricken field you must carry your sword to Europe. That we have lost Sir Wilfred and many another brave comrade is no fault of ours, and to return for them would be but to share their fate. The ship is lost, and had we not stumbled on this canoe in our retreat we should be dead; or, what is worse, prisoners in the hands of the Spaniards. That we may yet do some small adventure, I grant you; but without powder and with but two dozen swords, not against a walled town."

A murmur of assent from the buccancers supported him; and when I was once more master of my senses I found that I was indeed alone in the world. My father and the other Cavaliers had gone down in the fight, and only the resource of Radburn, who had led the survivors through the jungle in the night, himself and Henry Morgan sharing the burden of my senseless form, had saved our pitiful remnant.

By vote of the buccancers Prince Rupert was deposed, and Radburn filled his place as leader; and all men know what deeds of daring that small band performed. Of how we sailed to the open sea in our canoe, feeling it sink under us as half dead from hunger and thirst we ran it alongside a Spanish pink; of how we next took a huge carack and many rich prizes the story has been told often enough in Port Royal; but of the doings of Henry Morgan and his manner of rise to power nothing is remembered, save by me who loved him. But this is the story of it.

'Twas after we took the carack that the buccancers forgot the lessons they had learned from hard adversity. Our numbers all told were now but a score; for four men had been killed in taking the ship, and after our hardships all save the prince, Morgan and myself gave way to swinish indulgence. The working of the ship was left to a hand-

ful of prisoners whom we had spared, and our comrades lay about the deck in a drunken stupor, making us fair prey for any Spanish ship which might sight us.

Morgan spoke the prince fair, urging him to pistol Radburn and again assume command; but he was sulky at having been deposed and refused to listen. And then the lad—for he was little more—with his own hands disarmed that drunken crew and bound them fast; and with the help of the prisoners, whom he drove with no gentle hand, broached every cask of wine and spirit on the ship, until the scuppers ran redder than they had with Spanish blood.

Radburn was the first to recover his senses, cursing us roundly for mutinous and ungrateful dogs; but as the lees of wine died out in him he hung his head for shame when I spoke to him and minded him of all his promises to me.

"Aye, Harry lad, the evil that I warned you of has come upon us," he said. "That in the fighting I led you well no man can deny; but in victory Billy Radburn was ever a fool. Unloose me, lad, and until we come to Tortuga, where it's every man's privilege to be drunk, I'm content to serve any man who is strong enough to be his own master." Morgan was all for hanging him as an example to the others, but luckily I trusted him and turned him loose; for it was his example and strong arm which served to bring the others to heel.

And so for more than a year, under the leadership which Henry Morgan had seized, we sailed the Main; and no man had cause to complain of aught save his stern discipline. Many ships fell into our hands, and from two of them we gained welcome recruits in thirty buccancers who had been captured in one of Mansfelt's prizes and were being sent in irons to Cartagena to roast as heretics.

Much treasure we gained, for two great plate ships we had the plundering of, and Morgan ruled with an iron hand, allowing no man to be drunk and no woman to be taken from the prizes.

Radburn served faithfully, as did Prince Rupert; but when Morgan suggested that we again attempt the capture of Cartagena the men murmured, for they had each enough for a long carouse at Tortuga, and it showed the wisdom of the man as a leader that he gave way. So placing the prisoners, of whom we had no further need, in one of the captured ships, and retaining only such black slaves as we had taken, we set sail for the rendezvous we had left two years before.

But in those two years many changes had taken place. The Spanish King, alarmed that so many of his galleons had fallen into the hands of the buccaneers, had sent a strong expedition to Tortuga. It was but feebly held, as most of those who were not absent with the ships were in Hispaniola killing meat against their future need, and those who were left met with scant mercy at the hands of their conquerors. The news of this we had from one of them who had escaped and whom we picked up in an open boat; and also the intelligence that the Cromwell men who had been sent to Barbados had taken the island of Jamaica from the Spaniards, so it was to there we set our course.

And that was the manner of the coming of Henry Morgan to Jamaica, whose governor he was to be. The English ensign floated over a fair harbor which Cromwell had won, but it was the followers of Henry Morgan who were to keep it there when Charles Stuart came to his own; and the town he founded there was named Port Royal, in honor of that monarch's return to the throne which his father had quitted for the scaffold.

VII.

At anchor in the harbor lay the two great-ships of Mansfelt; and already in the town, which had sprung up like a mushroom, were the grog-shops of those who always welcomed with open arms and greedy hands the home-coming of the buccaneers. Of order or law there was none, for the colonists and the troops were all about the Span-

ish capital of St. Jago de la Vega, which lay some ten miles inland, well knowing that while the buccaneers made rendezvous thereabout they were secure from molestation by the Spaniards.

Fair and equable division of our plunder had been made according to the scale we had agreed upon; and it grieved me much to see the companions who had served with us so faithfully, who had suffered the privations of thirst and hunger and the pain of many wounds, each staggering under the weight of his fortune and hastening to squander it in the rum-shops and on the bold-eyed, painted women whose hearts were always tender to the roughest of our men so long as the bottom of his pocket had not been reached.

Radburn, who, faithful to his promise, had served as sailing-master with all fidelity, as soon as our anchors touched the sand was the first man into the shore boat, in either hand a great bucket filled with broad pieces-of-eight and on his back a cloak of Genoa velvet stuff with embroidery of gold. I would have reasoned with him, but the light of madness was in his eye; and when next I saw him he was astride a great cask of wine in the parade, with cutlas and pistol threatening all who would not drink with him with death; but no man or woman died at his hand.

The prince, Morgan and I stood upon the poop, helpless to restrain the men we had led for more than a year now that they were released from their bond of service, and as they deserted us, as rats do a vessel which is about to sink, I voiced my regret, but Morgan laughed.

"Nay, Harry; rather give thanks that we have not the lust for liquor," he answered. "In those boats go men who can wield cutlas and pike better than any one of us, and whom we have seen court death as they would a sweetheart. Better followers could no man ask; but had they not their weaknesses all would be leaders. For us it is a saving grace; for we shall profit by it, and when once more their pockets are empty there will

be no lack of followers when next we go to the Main."

"But, Master Morgan, in all your plans for greatness I hear nothing of your duty to your king," interposed Prince Rupert sternly, as Morgan faced him.

"And have I not served him faithfully?" he asked. "To spoil his enemies, to plant the white ensign of St. George where pope and Spaniard say that no heretic dare set foot, and gain for you great treasure to carry to his chest—is that not yeoman service?"

"And of the treasure you have gained for yourself—does any part of it go to that same chest?" asked the prince. Morgan shook his head.

"Not a stiver—until King Charles gives me his commission," he answered. "Hark you, Prince Rupert—you are for Europe and will have the king's ear. If you would counsel him wisely, say that here in the Indies lies an empire fairer than England; but that under the tropic sun the laws of England would languish and die. If he would keep it, see that he puts its government in strong hands which are ruled by a head with mother-wit enough to make them light when prudence counsels. Failing that, there might rise a man to rule these islands for himself, and King Charles may yet be called cousin by the King of the Indies, a man with head enough to wear a crown and wit enough to keep it."

There was no mistaking his meaning; and as he faced Prince Rupert, looking at him unflinchingly as his face darkened at the words which savored of defiance to his royal master, he looked every inch a king. The responsibility of leadership had matured his youthful face; success had given him a confidence of bearing, and the ambition which had led him to sell himself into servitude, that he might win fortune at the end had grown until to him whom nature had given much and chance had favored in no small degree, nothing seemed impossible. In every skirmish, at the taking of every ship and wherever danger was to be found, Henry Morgan had ever been in the

lead; but in them all he had come off unscathed; and even the scurvy and the fevers which had afflicted all of us at one time or another during that long cruise had passed him by. He was a handsome man, with a grace and dignity of carriage which equaled that of the prince himself, who was acclaimed the courtliest of King Charles' cavaliers; and he had a pretty taste in dress which set off his lithe figure and dark beauty of face.

For a moment I thought the prince would draw upon him; for now the cruise was ended each was equal to the other; but no man could resist his charm, and with a smile on his lips he extended his hand.

"If I know the house of Stuart, it is small store that any one of them will set by good counsel, Master Morgan," he answered slowly. "If Charles Stuart is like his father; 'tis more like that your words would cause your head to be brought to him; so, loving you, I shall e'en keep my peace; but one counsel I shall give to you. The memory of kings is but a short one for service rendered; but never king sat on a throne who loved not the power of gold. That you can gain it with your sword, I know, and I would warn you that in some safe place you lay that aside which will buy pardon; for with ambition such as yours you're like to need it.

"And one thing more I'll say to you; for you know not the ways of courts. Should you need favors where they are not to be won by the sword alone and where the gentle word has more power than the strong arm, remember that Rupert of the Palatinate has been your sworn comrade; and that though he be a prince he will ever be your friend." And so, for the time, parted Prince Rupert and Henry Morgan; for his highness was for Europe to share the fortunes of his master; while Morgan, with visions of an empire over which he himself might rule, gave little thought to the cause of the King of England, and cared only to be about his own affairs.

Mansfelt, who since he left us had

sacked Caracas and put three other cities of the Main to ransom, had returned with much treasure; and this his men were now squandering after the manner of their kind. Their leader, who I believe had cheated them of much that was rightfully theirs, as was his wont, had gained so great a name by his success that buccaneers were gathering from all the islands of the Indies and clamoring for him to lead them to further adventure; and seeing our fair ships he was not slow to ask us to join his fleet, proposing that Morgan should sail as vice-admiral. To this Morgan demurred, saying that if he took commission from another it would only be from King Charles; and wanting that he would take no other.

And so, with much argument between them, it was decided that we should join forces only so far as to take the Island of St. Catherine's to use as a base for forays on the Main, each to command his own fleet and the plunder to be evenly divided according to the numbers of our crews. Mansfelt we both distrusted, for he had scurvily left us when we sailed with Lolonois; but Henry Morgan feared no man, and of the former's ships for that moment we had need.

Of how we took St. Catherine's with our four ships and seven hundred men the tale has been so often told that I need not set it down. Never was a fairer spot for the purpose which we designed; for two great castles overlooked a harbor in which a dozen ships might lie; and no vessel could come or go from Cartagena or the Isthmus without our knowledge. We were minded to make it the rendezvous for all the scattered men of the old brotherhood, to hold it independent of England or France, and to look to the tribute from Spain to give us revenue; and this, save for the villainy of Mansfelt, we should have done.

We made laws for the due regulation of garrison and watch and ward, and the division of the spoil of war which should come into our hands; and a fair commerce we had. Each man was sworn to bring faithfully all that he

might gather to the common store, to conceal nothing and to deal fairly; but we had been but a short time in possession when whispers came to us that Mansfelt was acting the traitorous rogue, concealing precious stones and articles of small compass but great value about his clothes, when ships were taken, and in many ways cheating us of our just deserts. Portagee Manuel and Jack Williams, who had always been our true comrades, were set to watch him; and in the plundering of the *Madre de Dios*, a great carack with much store of plate and jewels which came from Porto Bello, they saw him take a bag of emeralds for his own use, pistoling the Spanish captain who might have sold of it, and so cheating us further of good ransom.

We had no doubt that Mansfelt knew he was discovered; for when he returned to St. Catherine's he stayed only long enough to move his stored plunder to the flag-ship, and then under cover of the night sailed for Port Royal. Morgan, who was watching keenly for a great galleon of which we had news, and feared to leave the castles with small garrison, sent me to follow him; but what with the foulness of my ship and a great storm which took us far from our course, it was a full month before we saw Port Royal; and our first greeting was the grim spectacle of the bodies of our two comrades bedaubed with tar and swinging from a high gibbet at Gallows Point.

In the year of our absence great change had come to Jamaica. Charles Stuart, again on his throne, had sent one Sir Thomas Modyford to govern in his name, with strict injunction to so regulate the buccaneers that large percentage of their honest gains should be sent to England as a royal tax. A stern man was Modyford, with more regard for his own pocket than the revenues of the king; and knowing that in the prosperity of St. Catherine's, where no tax was levied, he could read the decline of Port Royal as a rendezvous, he declared us outlaws and pirates. Mansfelt had cunningly compounded with him, and given over our two men,

—who could have told of his treachery—to be hanged as followers of Morgan, who was still outlawed; but having salved his conscience I found Modyford very willing to treat with me for free pardon; so, promising that Morgan would also return and take up a king's commission, I settled myself on shore and sent back Radburn with the news.

Mansfelt, swollen like a toad with the treasures he had robbed us of, had bought a fair house and thought to become a great citizen of the place, sending his ships to earn him further revenue while he lived at his ease. So while I waited for my friend I planned to bring him low, the creaking of the chains as the blackened bodies of my comrades swayed in the trade-wind urging me to vengeance on their betrayer.

It was at a great council of the buccaneers that my chance came; for over a thousand of the company were in the town, longing for some new venture to line their empty purses. Mansfelt had been drinking heavily with the captains through the day, for so he was wont to curry favor; and at the feast at night when we were all gathered together to discuss first the oxen roasted whole and many casks of good wine into which all might dip at will, he boasted of his skill in leadership, whereby those who followed him had gained much profit, naming in his drunkenness the galleons he had taken and the amount of plunder which each afforded.

His followers, being for the most part but poorly grounded in learning at the best, and now so far gone in liquor that their brains were well fuddled, took no note that he betrayed himself; for he gave the true amounts and not the lesser ones with which he had cheated them when it came to the division. But I, who had been sparing in my indulgence, wrote down each on paper, and rising in my place gave him the lie direct and named him for a thief and a traitor.

At sea my words would have brought swift and painful death; for by the laws of our company he who drew weapon

or incited mutiny against the admiral was put to the death by cruel torture; but now the company was on shore we were all equal. My words and Mansfelt's denial and defiance brought sobriety to many of that drunken crew; for by our agreement he who wronged his comrades of just share of the common plunder by concealing anything which came to his hands was scourged by all until the lash had flayed the skin from his body. Stern laws we had and rigorously enforced; for while we made unceasing war against the Spaniard and took his property as lawful prize on sea or land, there was no place among us for any save men who were honest as regarded ourselves.

Mansfelt was lost, for I had certain proof; and had I been a pragmatical sea-lawyer I might have demanded that he be flayed alive; but remembering his desertion when we served with Lolonois—which had led to the loss of my father and many a brave comrade—and now the wrong he had done Henry Morgan by having him proclaimed outlaw, I claimed the right of vengeance. Fair fight I offered him with dirk and cutlas, as was our custom, and he accepted it, boasting that he would slice me to ribbons and eat my ears. But when I advanced toward him, the others forming round us to see fair play, he treacherously fired his pistol and gave me a shrewd wound. The others then would have fallen on him, for by that act he merited death according to our law, but I claimed my blood vengeance; and before he could draw the second pistol I was on him and sheathed my dagger in his black heart.

And so died the vilest traitor who ever disgraced the fair company of buccaneers, leaving great store of plate, which Modyford promptly seized in the king's name; though it was small part of it that Charles Stuart ever had the handling of. My dagger had done good service to the cause; for with Mansfelt dead there was but one man fit to bear the honor of leadership; and so by its aid came my dear Henry Morgan to supreme command.

VIII.

It was like a victorious admiral rather than an outlawed pirate coming to sue for pardon that Henry Morgan returned to Port Royal harbor; for his broad pennant flew from the masthead of a stately galleon, while five other ships, each taken from the Spaniard, followed bravely after. Their holds were crammed to bursting with rich silks and spices gathered from those tyrants of the Main, while the sails were set and the ships' work done by prisoners and Africans taken from the slavers of the Genoa Company, to which the Spanish King had given the monopoly of trading in human flesh.

The buccaneers, dressed in the finery of grandees, were become too fine gentlemen to take in hand anything but their arms, and standing on the poop of the flag-ship, the great white plume of his hat fastened by a ruby as large as a hen's egg, the sword and pistols in the broad sash of crimson silk so crusted with precious stones that they seemed points of fire in the sunlight, stood my good comrade who had come to the Indies a bond slave, in rags and with his pockets empty.

That Modyford was held of small account you can believe, for all turned out to welcome their arrival, well knowing that the free-handed gentlemen of fortune would drive no hard bargains for their merchandise, and that the fleet carried that which would pave the streets with precious metals. With him stood Radburn, as ready now that they were safe in port to lead his comrades in squandering their gains in debauchery as he had ever been to captain them into battle. And now that the glory of the place has gone 'tis hard to credit that which happened with the coming of Morgan's fleet. For weeks there was no day or night in Port Royal. The shops of the traders were so filled that for want of room to shelter them under roof the bales of merchandise of priceless value were heaped about on the porches and even stacked high upon the sands of the beach.

The buccaneers, many of them men who had known naught but rags and the pinch of hunger in Europe, gorged themselves on fine meats, drank unceasingly of priceless wines, and with a laugh lost or won a hatful of gold doubloons at a single throw of the dice, boasting that there was much more to be had where they came from. Brazen women plied them with wine, winning a massive chain of gold or a jewel of price for a smile; while sharpers preyed on them with cogged dice and took in an hour what the poor fools had fought for a week to win.

And while they gambled and caroused, Morgan, Modyford and I held grave council. The governor was brazen in his dishonesty, and was all for cheating the king whose commission he dishonored. He would have us sail as freebooters and pirates, promising us safe harbor and free pardon when we returned, while he would but hang a dozen or so of our men to save his favor with the king. He would secretly go shares with us, furnishing us with ships and ammunition; but when Morgan had heard him out he rose and faced him contemptuously.

"Sir Thomas Modyford, I know nothing of the ways of kings or courts; and, faith, if what you say is true, I have small lust to come to better acquaintance; but in the rough school of the buccaneers I have learned honesty and fair dealing," he said bluntly. "That the king has right to tax that which I earn by my sword I may acknowledge when I hold his commission; but until then I keep it for myself. So soon as my men have had their fill of rum and riot I shall again lead them to sea; but do you so much as lay a finger on one of them for your cursed gibbets and I promise you that I shall hang you from the yard-arm of my flag-ship and send your carrion home in a cask of rum to the king you serve so badly.

"The king's commission as Admiral of the Indies I will have, or e'en carve out a kingdom for myself. Much time you have to think of it; for with all the will in the world, those who follow

Henry Morgan cannot soon squander what they earn; but for your profit you must squeeze the land-crabs of Port Royal who fatten on them. Of them you may hang or carbonado as many as you please; but dare to lay a hand on one of my company and I'll pull your town about your ears. Come, Harry lad, we'll go on ship, for this is no air for the lungs of honest men to breathe." And so we strode out and left the king's governor to his reflections, for he knew that Morgan had power to carry out his threats; and had he doubted it he would have needed only to watch our progress through the town.

Now that the venture was brought to safe conclusion the buccaneers were free of restraint; and among themselves captains and seamen gambled, caroused and fought together with no thought of rank. It was a wild scene we witnessed, for wine had maddened them, and he who would refuse to drink on invitation must e'en fight; but no man was so drunk that he failed in respect to him who had been their admiral.

There was that in his eye and manner which brought the most sodden or riotous speedily to his senses; and men who would have singed the governor's beard for a jest were sobered into civil greeting and salute as we passed. The very wenches who cozened them of their gold, many of them women who had fallen from good estate through being taken from the prizes to grace their revels, looked at his grave beauty hungrily and would have deserted their rich plundering for a smile from him; but no woman was ever wronged by Henry Morgan, though many loved him. Vile tales have been told of him, for no man comes to great power without making enemies; but I who was his close comrade for many years know the truth of it; and while in the sacking of a town by our wild followers much went on which a leader could not know of, the man ever held that the person of a woman should be held sacred, and took only her jewels, which were but a symbol of vanity.

For six long weeks we lay in Port

Royal harbor, giving the men good opportunity to spend their money; and all that time Modyford sulked in the house of Mansfelt, which he had taken for his own. And then when Radburn, shorn of his finery, empty of pocket, red of eye and tremulous of hand, came to warn us that the buccaneers were stripped as cleanly as a sacked city, we careened our ships and without as much as saying "by your leave" started our recruiting. And it was a strange thing that in that city where gold-pieces rolled in the gutters there was not provision to be had to victual us; so with only four ships and a scant four hundred men, where we might have had two thousand had we meat to feed them, we prepared to set out.

Modyford, seeing that he was in a fair way to lose all and that we might not return, compounded with us, granting us letters of marque to prey upon the enemies of the King of England, and promised to send us reenforcement of men and ships when we had found provision for them. To that end, that there should be no lagging, he did—with Morgan's gracious permission—enact that whosoever should become indebted for more than five and twenty pieces-of-eight should be sold into servitude. We sailed from Port Royal, no man but Morgan knowing of our destination; for it was ever by surprise that he counted upon winning against great odds. With three hundred men we landed on the Island of Cuba, marching inland twenty miles to the city of El Puerto Principe, which carries on a great trade with Havana; and never having been plundered by the buccaneers, it should have had great store of treasure.

The governor had received warning of our coming, and an army of near a thousand men opposed our passage; but though they fought stoutly they were no match for us with Morgan at our head; and killing more than six hundred of them while we lost less than fifty, we were speedily in the town. It proved to be but a poor place and the people had hidden their riches; so in spite of the shrewd torturing of those

who had not fled we came by only a pitiful fifty thousand pieces-of-eight in money and jewels; but Morgan, with the pity and good nature which he ever showed, ordered that the town be not burned if the inhabitants would but salt the meat from five hundred beeves and transport it to the fleet.

And truly it was a comical sight to see the chief citizens of the place and even the prelates of the church playing the part of butchers and salters, while the gentlemen of fortune looked on at ease and dallied with their women; for so anxious were they to be rid of our company that no man stood upon his quality. So from Cuba we sailed not much richer in gold, but with full provision for a greater venture, and returned to Port Royal to fill our ranks.

In two days we were again at sea with four hundred and sixty fighting men and nine ships; and when the island of Jamaica was lost to sight, Morgan for the first time disclosed that on which he had set his mind. It was no less than the capture and sack of Porto Bello, which save Cartagena was the strongest city of the Main. With our small number it seemed but a piece of madness; for two great castles garrisoned by a thousand men and strong walls of stone defended the town, while of artillery we had none. So a murmur arose from the men.

"But what else have you to look for?" asked Morgan scornfully. "Think you the King of Spain sends a regiment and builds great castles to no end? That strength is there shows that there is something to defend that's worth the taking; and I promise you that not a corner of that town but what shall give up gold. Two thousand men I might have had, but that means four thousand hands to share the treasure; and though it will be great I am no believer in such long division.

"If you are satisfied to plunder Indian camps for calabashes and cloaks of feathers, then you must get another man to lead you; for Henry Morgan goes to Porto Bello if he goes alone. This much I promise you: that from my own share of the treasure a hun-

dred pieces-of-eight goes to him who first plants our flag upon the battlements; but unless you speedily come to the conclusion to follow me, my own hands are like to spare my pockets."

If I could paint a picture of him as he stood before them, a good four inches taller than any other man in our company and of a comeliness of face and figure to make a Greek god envious, I could better make it plain how his words and manner won his followers to that mad design. Eyes that flashed fire and a look which set at naught stone walls and odds of numbers, with a manner which gave men confidence that he could not fail, drew the answering cheer which pledged them to his service; and where a moment before there had been only murmurs that he would lead them to their deaths there was now the determination to succeed. The dice-boxes gave way to grindstones, whereat each man sharpened cutlas and pike; the long buccaneer muskets were jealously overhauled and polished, and voices which had clamored only for rum besought the armorer for extra portions of powder and ball.

Morgan had well matured his plans, for he was ever a far-seeing leader; and it was no part of them to leave an avenue of retreat. The ships were left with men to care for them, and as we landed on the beach some ten miles from the city they headed out to sea, for he counted that while the lure of gold might tempt men on, the certainty of death behind would keep them to it.

"Now lads, in eight-and-forty hours they have my orders to come to anchor in Porto Bello harbor; and it would be but scurvy treatment if we were not there to welcome them," said Morgan; and so great was their faith in him that we had much ado to stop the cheer which might have given notice of our coming. It was fair midnight when we had won through the jungle paths under the guidance of one John Hawkesly, who had been many years a prisoner in those parts. So silent was our approach that Radburn and I fell on the drowsy sentinel at the outpost and

gagged him before he could make outcry. Under fear of death by torture he told us of the disposition of the troops and that the town was heavy with sleep, as we had come upon the ending of the carnival, when for three days and nights there had been unceasing merriment. But now the people slept that the next day they might be refreshed for the great spectacle of the *auto da fé*, when many heretics were to be burned in the great square.

The town we entered by a stratagem, Radburn with his pistol against the prisoner's ear making him shout out that we were a convoy with plate from Panama; and once within the gates we put the guard to the sword and seized the neighboring houses. The governor, seeing his first defenses passed, withdrew with his troops within the castles, opening on us with the great guns and casting down great quantities of stone and molten lead when we strove to approach the walls; while the citizens from their houses, with such thick walls that each was like a fort, annoyed us exceedingly with musket-balls and arrows. Many of our men were hit and daylight found us in no good plight; but Morgan, ordering that whenever we were molested from a house we should straightway kill every living thing within it and fire it for a funeral-pyre, we soon had the inhabitants suing for mercy; and herded them like sheep into the great church.

And then we held debate how we should subdue the castles; for they were defended by high walls and well garrisoned, and it was no easy nut to crack; for without artillery there was no way to make a breach without great loss. We were seated at council in the great hall of the Inquisition, and many of the captains were for making safe retreat with such treasure as we could easily gather, when that happened which set the blood of Englishmen at white heat and fit for any enterprise.

Hawkesly, who well knew the turnings and twistings of the place, had thought to show some of our men where he had suffered cruel torment in

the torture-chamber; and hearing English voices in the dungeons they had loosed the prisoners who were to be burned that day. We were in heated council, Morgan animating the wavering captains with fresh courage and upholding that we should first attack the great castle, when the sound of an English song came to our ears, and Radburn and I looked at each other as if we heard a ghost; for it was the voice of Wildairs and the refrain was,

On the long Moor o' Marston, oh!

And then from the gloomy portal of the prison of Mother Church came a sorry procession of scarecrows; men, aye, and women, too, with arms and legs twisted and broken by the rack and strappado, and skins burned and blistered by the application of hot irons and plates of glowing charcoal. Leading them were two men whom we had loved and mourned for dead in front of Cartagena; Wildairs, reduced to imbecility by torments and starvation, and with him a man with hair as white as snow and bearing cruel scars of torturing; but in the flashing eye and proud carriage of the head I recognized my father!

It has been held much to our discredit as gallant men that when we took the castle we forced Inquisitors and priests, and even the nuns who had countenanced them, to place our scaling-ladders; but had those who cavil at it seen those wrecks of what were once men and women, taken in fair fight and yielding themselves as prisoners of war for ransom, they would wonder that we were so tender as to give them easy death. And one slim priest, the Padre Fernando Vasquez, I would that we had hanged; for he escaped to harbor vengeance for long years, and by his devilish arts to compass our destruction.

There was no thought of retreat after that, and no question of asking or giving quarter. Great ladders on which four men might mount abreast were prepared; and singling out from our prisoners all who wore ecclesiastical habit we made them at the sword-point

carry them and raise them against the walls. The Spaniards within gave no heed to their cries for mercy, but hove down on them great stones and molten lead; but when they would give back we minded them of the tortures our people had received at their hands, and with blows and woundings forced them on. Then, when the ladders were fixed we swarmed up them with our fire-balls, casting them over the wall and throwing the soldiers in confusion; and following with only sword and pistol we took the place, but not without great loss. Ever at our head, swearing strange oaths and clad in the filthy *san benito* in which they would have burned him in the market-place, was Sir Wilfred; while Wildairs, still singing his ale-house chorus, went barehanded into the fight as if it were a May-pole dance.

Morgan had given strict orders that the governor should be spared, for he was minded to hang him for his defiance; but he would accept no quarter and made his last stand in the great courtyard with a ring of dead and wounded men about him. I bade him yield, but he laughed and defied me, crying that he would not be traitor to his king by surrendering to a pirate. And then, before any one could interfere, Sir Wilfred rushed upon him. The Spaniard's sword passed cleanly through his chest; but those strong arms, scarred by the torturer's thongs and made more powerful by that memory, were clasped about him and together they fell back over a low curb and dashed to their deaths in the great well of the castle. And so in three short hours I gained and lost again my father; but I felt no sadness at his death, for it was that of a gallant gentleman and such as he had ever craved.

Then Morgan, knowing that in victory his men were not to be restrained, and ever mindful of their safety, gathered the prisoners in the one castle; and fearing lest they might revolt and fall upon our men when they were helpless from wine, we touched off the magazine and so insured our safety. The rest of that adventure is well known; of how we tarried there for

three full weeks, sacking and harrying the town and forcing the inhabitants to give up that which they would have cheated us of by concealment. Word we had from the Governor of Panama, bidding us to be gone and begging of our courtesy to know by what strange arts we had taken so strong a town without artillery. To this Morgan replied with equal civility, sending him defiance and with it a cutlas and pistol which he told him were our weapons, and bidding him reserve them carefully, for he would shortly come to claim them. To this the governor answered that he begged us not to hasten, and sent in acknowledgment a ring set with a great diamond as payment.

And so, when we had come to the end of our provisions and had gathered all that was to be had we again returned to Port Royal, having lost only a hundred and three-score men, and having gained above a half-million pieces-of-eight, a great store of precious merchandise and all the black slaves we could transport.

IX.

Such success as Morgan met with made him a hero with the colonists, and they would have rebelled had Modyford seriously tried to stop our traffic; for the rich spoil which we brought back attracted traders as flies come to a honey-pot, which was much to the advantage of the colony. Sour-faced Puritans from New England sailed to Jamaica with cargoes of salt fish and other necessities, looking askance at the merrymaking and carousing of their customers, but failing not to take advantage of the drunkenness to drive shrewd bargains.

Stolid Hollanders came from New Amsterdam, bringing goods needed for the colony; and though they ever drank even with the gentlemen of fortune, they were men with such capacity for liquor that at the end they had the better of the trade. Furthermore, it was ever our custom to rescue from the harsh slavery of the Spaniards the blacks whom they had taken from

Africa, bringing them to Port Royal, where we sold them so cheaply that the planters were constantly able to replace those who died from labor in the cane-fields.

So while Modyford must perforce put good face upon the matter in Jamaica, he set about to ruin our credit with the king; and this he did so slyly that it was long before we had news of it. The gibbets on Gallows Point were always filled, but never a buccaneer swung from them; and we had no means of knowing that in his despatches the governor named his scurvy victims as followers of "that wicked pirate, Henry Morgan"; for he always told us that he besought his master for a commission for him. In Europe, England and Spain were at peace; and almost daily the Spanish ambassador made bitter complaint of our forays, which the king answered by showing Modyford's reports, of how he hanged the pirates whenever they fell into his hands. This was like to have ended disastrously for us, for on our next cruise, which as all men know was against Maracaibo and Gibraltar which lie in Venezuela, the King of Spain sent a great armada against us, proclaiming us pirates and outlaws, and with strict injunction to grant no quarter.

Of how we overcame them, after living a month in each of those two cities—for so obstinate were the inhabitants that each one separately must be put to the question to discover the treasure he would keep from us—the story has been told a thousand times. But the generalship which Morgan displayed added new glory to his name. It was on the flag-ship which we took that we found the correspondence to the admiral which proved Modyford a traitor; and much merriment we had over his lying letters. In proof of his zealous service he reported how he had taken at great risk the desperate men and hanged them, while we knew that his gallows' fruit were but miserable hangers-on of Port Royal, the petty thieves who plundered drunken men and who would have quaked in their boots at

mention of a Spaniard. When we returned with greater treasure than before, I was for taxing Modyford with his treachery; but Morgan claimed the right; and while our comrades reveled in the town we sought him out. Wild-airs, whom tender care had made himself again, accompanied us.

The light of greed was in Modyford's eyes when he received us, for he had seen our treasure landed; and that we sought him made him think that we had come to buy our pardon. "Welcome back, my merry gentlemen—you come to bring me tribute to the king, I doubt not," he said eagerly. But when Morgan drew his sword and on its point gave him the traitorous reports his face went white.

"It's no fault of yours, Sir Thomas, that our necks have not been stretched for pirates," he said sternly. "You may remember that I promised you that if you harmed a single man of mine your life should pay the forfeit. Here at my sword-point is the proof under your own hand that you have gloried in it." Truly, to us who were ever close comrades with death, it was pitiful to see a man of English blood so fearful. For falling on his knees in his great audience-room he craved our pardon, pleading the necessity for keeping in the king's favor.

"And you know well that in fact I have never harmed any follower of yours," he pleaded. "These rogues I hanged were of no great account, and I saved my credit without harming you."

"While you named me for a pirate to the king and put me off with fair promises of his commission," said Morgan with a sneer. "Sir Thomas Modyford, if you had done that which you boasted of I should kill you with a hangman's noose; but as you have only slandered my fair name I'll give you the chance to defend yourself; and kill you in fair fight."

"And do you call it fair to force me to that—knowing if you fail and I kill you, your followers would tear me to pieces?" answered Modyford, who had no lust for such a combat. Then I

would have taken the fight to myself, but Wildairs stepping quickly forward threw his glove in his face.

"There is much truth in what you say, but Captain Morgan can well control his men; so I will fight you in his place," he said quickly. "If you should hap to kill me you shall come to no harm; and, if I kill you, there will be small loss to the king, and for old service he would hold me guiltless." The look which Morgan turned on him comforted me for being forestalled, for it was that of the tiger whom one would rob of its prey, and with stern words he bade him retake his gauntlet.

"This quarrel is mine and no man takes it from me," he said in a voice of thunder. "I'll plight my word to you that if in fair fight you kill me, my men shall hold you guiltless and these two gentlemen will so control them that you shall not be molested. Should you fear that I cannot keep my promise, you can insure your safety by flight, for a king's ship lies in the harbor. We can so arrange that our affair will be settled in all privacy, for we will fight far from the town; and should I fall you can go aboard your ship and win away to England. With your false tongue the report of how you yourself slew the pirate Morgan will gain you much promotion; but fight you must, or I'll hang you as a traitor and myself carry the news to the king with the letters of marque signed by your own hand as proof that what I did was under your safe conduct." And so Modyford, knowing that escape was impossible, consented, and we came speedily to agreement.

At moonrise we were to meet on the beach at the seaward side of the palisades, a mile from the town; he with two seconds of his own choosing. It was a sweet spot for such a rendezvous; the hard sand as firm as a board floor, and the thick chaparral screening it from observation; but holding Modyford for a traitor I would have taken greater following. This Morgan would not listen to, saying truly that if he should fall there would be great difficulty in restraining our wild men whom

only he could govern; and so, with only Wildairs and myself he set out gaily, never dreaming of ill ending to the adventure.

We proceeded in a canoe from Port Royal; and, knowing Modyford for a coward, I marveled to see him with two companions on the beach awaiting us, while the king's ship, which would carry him to safety should he kill Morgan, lay hove to a mile from the shore. It was but a poor trap for men whom constant ambuscade and stratagem should have made wary, but thinking only of the fair fighting of England we walked boldly into it. All about was perfect silence and the moon made the sands as light as day; but in the shadows of the chaparral lurked a good two-score men from the king's ship, placed there in ambuscade by the governor's order.

Of that which followed I have little stomach to tell; even against those odds we might have won had we had the heart to fight as was our wont; but while each one of us had killed many Spaniards in our ventures, when we saw the round faces of Englishmen against us we could not bring ourselves to kill. They knew not why they fought us, but it was the governor's order; and while we stood on our defense they beat our swords down with stout cudgels and we were quickly bound and helpless prisoners. Modyford, who had taken good care to keep clear of our blades, jeered at us when we were bound, for he had no idea of faith or honor.

"Now, my bold buccaneers, I'll show you who rules in Jamaica," he said. "Morgan, the king's ship goes to London direct, and you go in her, safely held in chains. Short shift you'll find, for Charles Stuart will hang you out of compliment to Spain. Renshaw and Wildairs I keep here as hostages; and should your drunken followers raise a murmur I'll hang them out of hand, and the regiment which comes from England will quickly put down rebellion."

With the patience which had so often enabled him to win against hopeless

odds, Morgan used no breath in reply; for he ever held that it was a waste of good lather to shave a jackass; but taking advantage of the moment before he was torn from us he bade me to have no thought of vengeance; but, if I could contrive escape, to fetch the treasure he had secreted in a safe place against emergency, and to follow swiftly to England.

"If you can win away it may yet save me," he whispered. "Go to Prince Rupert, and if he can but get me speech of the king I'll return to wring this craven's neck; but I charge you not to rob me of my vengeance." And so, while Wildairs and I were dragged through the chaparral to imprisonment, Henry Morgan was taken to the ship to go in chains to England, as reward for all his brave service to the king against the Spaniards to be gibbeted for fools to laugh at. This, save for a lucky chance, might have been the ending of it, for in their revelry our men would have little thought of their leaders; and it was Modyford's design to hold us close prisoners in his own house until the arrival of the regiment of which he had news should make him secure.

It was his own greediness which led to his undoing, for being unable to exact tribute he had taken other means to come by the gold of the buccaneers, importing many cheats from the gaming-hells of England, who played with them; and, sharing in their gains, he took by duplicity that which he dared not take by force. One of these men had challenged Radburn to a main at dice, thinking him drunk enough to plunder; but when he threw sixes three successive times the buccaneer seized the bones, and splitting them with his dirk revealed the cogs. Radburn, roaring that he would nail him by the ears, jumped for him; but being none too steady on his feet the cheat escaped, and with the buccaneer in close pursuit fled for protection to Modyford's house.

The sentries and servants had small lust to stop Radburn when he fell upon them, swearing with strange oaths that he would have his satisfaction if he had

to drag his man from the governor's own bed; so when I heard his voice I called to him before the sentries could silence us. I think the sight of us trussed up like chickens for the spit must have sobered him, for with a cut for which he had been famous he sheared the head clean off the soldier who opposed his entry, and his companion dropped his musket and bolted out the window. And then again the wine was uppermost, for he was always a man of humor; and it was a good ten minutes before I could quiet his mad laughter at our comical position.

At last, at word of Morgan's plight he loosed us, swearing to carbonado Modyford with his own hands; but it was like to have cost us our lives to escape from the house, for his ribaldry had given the soldier time to call the guard, and we had great trouble to cut our way through them. Radburn was all for raising the alarm and summoning his drunken companions to exact swift vengeance; but we managed to persuade him that it would insure Morgan's death, and at last won him on board ship.

"But, faith, it's hard to have such glorious opportunity go to waste," he grumbled, jingling the doubloons which fairly burned in his pockets for lack of time to spend them. "It's bad enough to be driven with the admiral's discipline so that we dare not get drunk at sea; but now to have to come sober with money in my pocket because he would walk into a trap is monstrous. But say the word, sirs, and we'll put Modyford to the spit, and carbonado him till he's browner than any jack Spaniard."

"Radburn, one word of what's happened on shore and our men will be past control," I said sternly. "To you I'll leave it to go quietly to gather such as we may depend upon to work the fastest of our ships and to fetch the victualing. Say only that we sail upon the admiral's service, and not where we are bound. Surely, drunk as they are, we should have a crew by daylight, for there are many who love him."

"Aye, if I stand in the market-place

and call for those who love Henry Morgan to follow us there'll be no buccaneer left in Port Royal," he said as he swung over the side. "Even the wenches would leave their fair plundering to help us work the ship; and, faith, if they get wind that Modyford has badly used him I believe they'd help to pull the rope to hang him." And so he left us to follow out our part. When we again met on board I carried Morgan's ransom in my pouch, while those who followed us would have stormed the Tower itself to fetch him out.

That we set sail so soon gave me hope that we should reach London before him, for we laid our course for Bristol, while they must take the longer voyage to London. But though we carried sail until we buried the bowsprit in the seas and the masts creaked and groaned under the pressure, we could not make enough speed to satisfy our wishes. And that the hearts of our men were in the quest was shown in that we passed a stately galleon with the ensign of Spain floating in the breeze; but with such a rich prize ready to our hands there was no thought of pause while Henry Morgan's fate hung in the balance.

"There's plenty more to be had where she sails from, but our admiral has but one life," was the cry from all our men. And so, greatly to their surprise—and I doubt not to their relief—we passed them by. Well it had been for us had we taken the time to send her with all on board to the bottom; for I learned afterward to my great sorrow that the Padre Fernando Vasquez sailed as passenger; and boasting that it was his supplication which saved the ship he gained great repute for holiness and so came to advancement.

It was a long two months before we came to Avonmouth; and leaving Radburn in command Wildairs and I took horse for London, spurring again on the broad road where we had met so many years before; but it was now with even a heavier heart that I traveled, for no word could we learn of Morgan's fate. It was the evening of the

second day that we came to London, strange figures in our Spanish finery, which was disfigured by the dust and rain of England. But Wildairs' ready wit gained us quick news of the prince. That I had a handle to my name by right of birth had ever escaped me, for that meant nothing with the buccaneers; but with Prince Rupert's lackeys Wildairs' loud announcement that Sir Harry Renshaw demanded audience brought prompt attention. And then I thought they would have cheated us; for one, who seemed to know that I might come, informed me that the prince was not at home, but offered to guide us to him. Through the dark London streets we passed, following his lead to a tavern of no great appearance called the Cocoa Tree, and entering with scant ceremony he showed us to a room where four men sat at table.

Three of them I hardly saw, though they were men of goodly presence, for I had eyes only for him who sat in the lowest seat. There, dressed in clothes braver than the others, with sword at his side and hands free from fetters, sat my good comrade and admiral, Henry Morgan, and with a cry of relief I threw my arms about him.

"Odds fish, cousin Rupert, you're richer by a hundred guineas, if this scarecrow be not a ghost," I heard one say. But when I would have turned on him the arms of Morgan were about me, and he whispered that I should hold my peace, for I was in the presence of the king.

X.

The king's ship was a fast sailer and had already been four days in London when we arrived at Bristol. Morgan, under the warrant of Modyford, had been taken in heavy irons to the Tower and lodged in a dungeon; but in that long voyage he had so won the officers and men that at a word they would have joined his service. It was never Morgan's way to seduce men from their allegiance, as he held that a traitor could never be trusted; and confident

of the justice of his cause he had gone gaily to his imprisonment, charging the ship's captain only to take news of his predicament to Prince Rupert.

And Rupert, who had ever been a true and good comrade, although he was not made for a great leader, speedily disproved the advice which bids us put not our trust in princes. Using his good offices with the king, who was of a merry disposition and inclined ever to mercy, he gained our admiral's release, giving his personal security that he would hold himself at the king's disposition. And then, knowing that Morgan would be his own best advocate, he took advantage of the king's habit of going abroad at night escorted only by one of his great nobles and boon companions, to bring them together at the Cocoa Tree tavern. And thus we found them supping with Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. And Morgan with his simplicity and direct speech charmed the king, making him laugh at the recital of many merry jests we had played upon the Spaniards, and gaining his interest by the talk of our gains.

"And but for our niggardliness in withholding a poor piece of parchment, naming you Admiral of the Indies, we might have been fair partner in your gains," said his majesty enviously.

Morgan told him of how he had ever kept out from the treasure the fairest of the jewels, intending to give them over when they were face to face, that no greedy governor might levy upon them with dishonest hands. At this the king's eyes glistened, for he had ever need of gold and jewels to satisfy the demands of many women whom he loved. But when Morgan enumerated his store and told him that they would be brought by me, his majesty laughed scornfully.

"Odds faith, if what you have told me is true, you gentlemen of fortune have little knowledge of the meaning of *meum et tuum*!" he exclaimed. "And if you have entrusted so great a treasure to one of your rascally crew, 'tis little like he'll remember that Charles Stuart lives, with such bright

jewels to make him forget his service."

Morgan, who was ever moved easily to wrath when the fidelity of a comrade was impeached, would have made answer; but Prince Rupert, wiser in the ways of courts, pressed his foot under the table to give caution, and vouching for my honesty laughingly offered to wager a hundred golden guineas that within the fortnight I would come, bringing the treasure without keeping out an iota of it.

This wager the king accepted, graciously saying when my name was given that he was like to lose it, for Renshaws had ever been faithful to his house. And more than that, he promised that if I were faithful to my leader, that he would believe all that Morgan said and hold us for honest gentlemen adventurers instead of bloody pirates. But that if I failed him it would be a proof of Morgan's guilt; and in that case he promised to hang him in chains on a high gibbet for the satisfaction of the Spanish embassy.

And so by my fidelity I won my comrade's life; for when on the white cloth I emptied out the sack of jewels and the light was reflected from great diamonds from the Brazils, emeralds and rubies from the countries of the Main, and many a huge stone of price wrested from great prelates of the church, the king's eyes glistened with equal brightness. And when he had played with them to his heart's content he bade me place them out of sight and carry them for him. When we passed out into the night he grasped my arm and leaned on me, bidding the others form a body-guard, for the streets of London were not safe at night.

So Henry Morgan, who had gone from England a slave and returned to it in fetters to hang for piracy, with drawn sword walked with Prince Rupert before his king in all honor, while Buckingham and Wildairs walked behind us until we were come to the small postern of the palace. There the king bade us a merry good night, promising that he would speedily see us righted. Morgan, Prince Rupert, Wildairs and

myself went to Rupert's great house, where we held high revel through the night, even after the manner of the buccaneers; for the cold of England called for creature comforts.

The memory of kings is but a fickle one, as we soon found to our sorrow; for while Charles Stuart did nothing to embarrass us, he seemed to have forgotten that we existed. Perhaps most men, having so narrowly escaped the gibbet, would have been satisfied to sink into a peaceful oblivion; but Morgan was filled with such ambition for further enterprise that he chafed under the inaction. Rupert counseled patience, telling us that the king, when once he had been plundered of the jewels by the fair hands of the ladies of the court, would remember whence they came and who had brought them, laughing loudly when I grumbled that the king was then much like a buccaneer himself. But I saw no occasion for his mirth. It was these same ladies who sped our cause, however; for with the curiosity of their sex they wished to see the man who had gathered such jewels of price. And the King good-naturedly remembered our names, and commanded our appearance at his court.

There, as in every place, Morgan was soon a prime favorite, and the great ladies vied with each other for his smiles, esteeming them even more than the gifts which he bestowed with lavish hand. From all of that great company which gathered round the king he had black looks from none save the train of the Spanish ambassador, who made constant complaint to his majesty of our depredation upon his master's dominions. In his suite there arrived one whom I would fain have given taste of my dagger; for in the gay dress of courtier and secretary to the ambassador I recognized him for that priest of the Inquisition, Fernando Vasquez, who had unfortunately escaped death when we forced him and his fellows to aid us in taking the castle at Porto Bello.

Prince Rupert, ever a steadfast friend, warned us of the plots against

us, telling us that three of the great beauties of the court were in the pay of the Spanish ambassador, and therein lay our greatest danger. For Charles Stuart was ever influenced by a woman's whims. Morgan, proving himself as skilful in ways of courts as in the field of war, straightway paid court to them, until the ambassador looked blacker than ever; and his secretary, plotting as was the manner of his kind, had gossip carried to the king that Morgan had supplanted him. So with plot and counterplot we were busy enough to keep our favor; until the king, being sore pressed for money, again gave us a rendezvous at the Cocoa Tree. There with great frankness he explained the case, telling us that he was under great pressure to have us hanged as pirates, and begging us to return to the Indies to free him of the trouble.

"Sire, to me it's all one whether your hangman here or Modyford at Port Royal exercises his office on my neck," answered Morgan smiling. "Glad I should be to return to the Indies, for I have in mind an enterprise which promises to make all of our previous gains seem of little worth. But this I'll tell you frankly—if I go as Henry Morgan I am my own master and never shall I come again to England; but in the South Seas I shall make an empire for myself. If I should sail as Admiral of the Indies, commissioned by your gracious majesty, then am I the King of England's servant, and he shall have the just share of what we plunder."

The king had little fixity of purpose; and having that day given audience to Fernando Vasquez I believe that he was half minded to hang us out of hand, or at best to send us out as pirates, planning to profit again without having it appear that he was privy to the foray.

For a long time he sat in silence, weighing, I doubt not, the chance of war with Spain against his private pocket; and when he rose and faced our comrade there was such a stern look upon his face that I feared the half defiance of Morgan would have sealed our condemnation. And then Charles

Stuart was nearer to his death than when he sheltered in the oak to hide from Cromwell's men; for when he in stern voice demanded Morgan's sword I would have dirked him had I not seen the smile on Rupert's lips when my dagger was half from its sheath.

Morgan with wonder on his face drew his sword from its scabbard and murmuring that it had ever been at his Majesty's service presented him the hilt, while Rupert and Villiers taking him by the arms at a sign from the king, with kindly hands forced him to his knees. And the king, with the smile which had ever won him love upon his face, raising the sword gave him the accolade which dubbed him knight, promising him that he should have his commission in spite of the King of Spain and the pope his ally.

So Sir Henry Morgan came to his rights in that room of the Cocoa Tree, the king enjoining secrecy until all matters were arranged. But so pressing was his need that it ever jogged his memory; and within the week we again took horse for Bristol, our company added to by many recruits of noble name who thought to gather diamonds as easily as the birds steal cherries, so great had been the talk of our spoil of war. As we rode out from London, passing the Spanish embassy on our way, I thought I saw behind a lattice the sharp eyes of Fernando Vasquez; but when I told Sir Henry of it he laughed and tapped his wallet where lay the king's commission, swearing that he cared nothing for all the Spaniards in creation, and threatening to use it as a taper to singe the beard of their king.

At Bristol we found Radburn in safe harbor and comfortably drunk at the Negro Head, where Polly had now come to be mistress while good Mistress Williams, crowned with years and affected with infirmities sat by the fire-side in the tap-room. And Sir Henry, forgetting all his dignity, must even drink a glass with them, kissing the blushing Polly for old remembrance and dropping into the lap of the old dame—who would have risen to curtsy,

despite her stiffened limbs, to so fine a gentleman—a great purse of gold.

"'Tis but the payment for the breakfast I took on my last day in England, with lawful interest," he said laughing; and then, as if she had been a queen, he raised her knotted hand and kissed it, while the company looked on wonderingly. But that was Henry Morgan's way, never forgetting those who had done him a service, and with ever a kiss for a pretty woman and a ready sword-point for an enemy. The which I have ever believed to be a good course for a gentleman of fortune to steer.

XI.

The king had volunteered no information as to his intuitions regarding Modyford, and Sir Henry had purposely held his peace, fearing that a hint might draw out the royal command to hold his hand; but as we neared Port Royal there came a strange gleam to his eyes. And knowing him so well, I felt that the governor was like to need greater protection than a single regiment afforded to save his skin. Now that he was a knight and held the king's commission, there was no man great enough to refuse him combat, but I knew that should Modyford fall into his hands he would hang him for the poltroon he had proved himself to be.

But when we arrived we found that the king had anticipated our vengeance, recalling Modyford in disgrace so that he, too, went to England in chains; and being but a man of poor spirit he was hanged for having issued letters of marque to Henry Morgan, which gratified the Spanish ambassador exceedingly; although, being unused to the king's method of thought, I could never see how he came to such a wise decision.

For the moment the governorship was vested in the colonel who commanded the king's soldiers and in our three ships, of which the largest was the *Revenge*, a fair vessel which was a present from the king and carried thirty-four great guns; we arrived just in time to see a sorry procession wending to Gallows Point. The colonel, a

man of little wit, would even have hanged a dozen of our old comrades; who, falling upon evil times with no man to lead them, had battered on those who had received such good profit from their plundering; and finding them greedy dogs who would not share, had put them to the strappado.

Sir Henry quickly turned them loose, for they were among the best of all our company; and when the colonel made objection, he threatened to hang him in their stead—which speech was much applauded by all the buccaneers. In Port Royal were gathered, with those we brought with us, upward of five thousand men, all eager to join a force under the leadership of Sir Henry; but now that he held the king's commission he was a different man and difficult to suit.

It was a fair sight to see him swinging at ease in a hammock of fine grass under two great palm-trees, judging the men who came before him with humble supplication to be led they knew not where. Morgan had ever held that quality was of more moment than quantity in his followers, for provision was always scarce, and many hands made too short work of plunder. No man knew his intention, for the Spaniards employed shrewd spies to give them timely warning; but the news had spread abroad that he had an enterprise in mind, and not a man of the buccaneers but wished to serve.

And so for many days he chose his men, rejecting all who were not of proved courage or who were physically unfit, until two thousand of the best were accepted to follow him, and all was ready for the greatest of his campaigns. When he had selected sufficient men to man a ship he despatched it immediately to sea, with orders to go to Hispaniola to be victualled at the Spaniards' expense, giving for rendezvous at a certain date the Isla de la Vacha, that no man might suspect our destination.

So he saved them from great temptation, for so sure were the harpies and leeches of the town that we should return with great riches, that so soon as

it was known that a man was accepted by Sir Henry there was no limit to the credit he might have. And then, when all our preparations were complete, we sailed in the *Revenge* to meet them, it being the month of October, which marks the end of the hurricane-season in these seas.

A goodly fleet of seventeen ships, manned by two thousand picked men we formed as we sailed for the Main, with such an organization as we had never had before. Sir Henry flew from the masthead his ensign as Admiral of the Indies, and lived in great state as befitted his rank. With him, in close attendance, were many gentlemen who had come from England as adventurers; but in his counsel were only Wildairs, Radburn and myself.

When we were safe from land the word was given to each captain that we should sail for the island of St. Catherine's, which now had been long in the hands of the Spaniards, they using it as a place of banishment for the criminals of the countries of the Main. Knowing that, since we held it, it had been made much stronger, we expected a stout resistance. But so great was the terror of Sir Henry's name that, when we arrived there on the fourth day, in answer to our cartel the governor sent word privily that if we would grant quarter we might have possession, begging of our grace that we should save his reputation by making feint of an attack.

And so with great merriment we disembarked, making pretense of a martial array, and with laughter mingling with the reports of great guns rushed upon them. It was like to have led to disaster, for many of our men stumbled upon casks of wine, and in their drunkenness forgot it was but a play, and in memory of old times were all for cutting throats. These Sir Henry punished most severely, for he was all for stern discipline; and then, calling us to him in the hall of the greatest castle, he made known all of his design.

Before him had been brought many of the prisoners who were banished to the island for evil deeds, and among

them were two famous bandits sent from Panama. These men he questioned most closely as to the strength of the place and the means of getting to it; and, finding that it was held by only five thousand men and that but one great castle need be taken, he straightway announced it as our destination, and determined to make good the promise he had sent to the governor when we sacked Porto Bello, to come and reclaim his pistol and cutlas. As a mark of his great love and favor to me, he bade me take five hundred men and sail to the Chagres to reduce the castle of San Lorenzo, which blocked the route he should take across the Isthmus; while he, being minded to establish great discipline, should rest at St. Catherine's with the main body, strengthening the place as a base and bringing his wild followers to good order.

It was with great heart for the undertaking we set out, for we learned that the place was held by only seven hundred men, which to the buccaneers was small odds; and Radburn, who went as my lieutenant, boasted that in two days we should pledge Sir Henry's health within the walls. We found it no easy task, however, for the bars at the harbor-mouth stopped the progress of our ships, and we were forced to land in canoes and pinnaces, while the Dons played on us with their great guns and a hail of musket-balls and arrows which was most annoying. The castle of San Lorenzo had been made a very strong place by labor of the slaves and convicts; great walls of stone on the crest of a high hill beside the river, and bastions cunningly formed from earth contained in wicker baskets flanked it on three sides. There was no place of advantage where we could plant guns to make a breach; so, as there was nothing else for it, we must even attempt it by assault.

That we were not lacking in energy is well shown by the fact that in the first day's effort we lost near a hundred men, while half as many more were sorely wounded, and not one of us but had shrewd scratches.

So well did the Spaniards fight, having the protection of their walls, so that we could not come to close quarters with them, that in all that day we were unable to fix a petard against the gates or mine even the outermost of their defenses; while the sounds of revelry coming from them in the night enraged my men, who having brought no store of wine were forced to quench their thirst with the water of the river; which, as all men know, is a most unwholesome thing in these parts.

So in the morning, being in no good humor, they were fit for any venture; and with Radburn and myself in the lead set out to assault the place once more, vowing no quarter should be given or taken, and that sooner than return to the agonies of thirst they would to a man leave their bodies before the wall. And then that happened which grieved me sorely; and yet, so strange are the ways of Providence, it was to be the means of our success.

Radburn, who never seemed to have enough of fighting, and who was racing with me to see who should be the first to plant a scaling-ladder, received fair in the chest an arrow which was driven with such force that it stuck out two handbreadths from his back. I thought to see him fall, for it seemed that no man could take such hurt and live; but coughing blood which almost strangled the curses in his throat, he plucked the arrow out with his own hands; and, vowing that he would not die without killing another Spaniard, he wound it with cloth torn from his bloody shirt. Snatching a musket from the man who supported him he rammed the arrow home, and then before he fell from very weakness, he fired it back over the wall whence it came.

It pained me that I must leave him there to die alone, for in our forays we had ever fought side by side, but the fire of the Spaniards was most grievous. We climbed on, being minded to make an attack on the great gate. In our assault we gained little advantage, for the gate was defended by flanking towers from which the Spaniards shot my men like sheep or crushed them

with huge stones; but it served to draw them all to the defense, so that they did not notice what went on within. It was the arrow which Radburn had shot in sheer defiance which led to their undoing; for the cloth with which it was wound had been fired from the powder, and landing on a roof of thatch set it alight.

So shrewdly did we press the attack on the gate that all the men of the garrison were summoned to resist us, and the blaze which a single bucket of water might have extinguished grew to a great conflagration unnoticed. And so, just when I had thought our venture was a failure, it reached a magazine, and, blowing a great breach in the walls, gave us ready entrance. The Spaniards, thinking they were attacked on the other side, were thrown in great confusion, and we were able with no great effort to put an end to them. My first care was for Radburn, whom we found still alive. When he opened his eyes to the bathing of his face he complained bitterly of a grievous thirst, but cursed the man who offered him water to quench it.

So, carrying him to the castle, I took care that he should, at least, die comfortably, and from the governor's own cellars had them fetch flasks of the finest wine. It was a heavy butcher's bill we had to pay for gaining San Lorenzo, for above two hundred of my own men were dead or so badly hurt that they were forever useless; and the surgeons were so busy with their hacking and sawing that for two days and nights they must stay awake and sober. But none the less, I had opened the gate to Panama. While Sir Henry pulled a long face at the casualties, he was well pleased that we had taken so great a place.

In my despatches I had warned him of the bars of rock and sand at the entrance of the river; so it was with great surprise that I saw the fleet sail bravely in, so shrouded in the smoke of their saluting cannon that they were lost to sight; but when it cleared away there were fair half of them but hopeless wrecks. Of loss of men there was

none, for they carried good supply of canoes; and when I grasped his hand on the beach there was a smile on his face which told me the loss was no sorrow to him.

"There must be no laggards when we march to Panama," he said. Then I knew that he had purposely cut off means of retreat, believing that all the attraction must lie in front to stimulate each man to his best endeavor. To the gentlemen adventurers from England the expedition now seemed of little promise, for San Lorenzo held no treasure worth the taking; and the bodies of the Spaniards, on which the vultures made great feast, proved that they could take a lot of beating; while the great pits in which we laid our dead and the many poor wretches who were so sadly crippled, showed that they also gave shrewd blows.

Until then the living had been soft, with dainty food and slaves to wait upon them; but when they saw us marshaling our men for the march, discarding slaves and taking but one day's provision that each might have the greater strength to carry powder and ball, those dandies ventured to raise a protest. Most of them had seen war, but it was with the accompaniment of baggage-trains and great camp equipage, with guns for making breaches and all its panoply. And it was then that they first made acquaintance with Henry Morgan as we had ever known him; for in his knighthood and admiralship it had secretly grieved me to see him become somewhat of a courtier.

"Now, gentlemen of England, here is the parting of the ways," he said sternly, when they murmured. "To-morrow at daybreak we set out for Panama, and he who is not with me is against me. I shall leave a strong garrison to hold this place; but in it there shall remain no man by his own desire. Each one of these men who have followed me before I know I can depend upon; and those whom necessity forces me to leave behind will be sore to heart, but I know that I can rely upon their obedience. I shall have no untried men here to stir up discontent by their

grumbling that they lie not soft enough; and if you fear the hardships of our march you must e'en take ship for Jamaica, forfeiting the right to participation in the glory and the spoils of war."

Secretly I would have been glad to see them waver; for it had been no pleasant thing to have them so much in the admiral's favor, sitting at wine, dicing and merrymaking with him; but they were English, and at heart brave men; so with humble apology and all submission they begged to go with us, each swearing all fidelity and loyalty; and I must do them the justice to say that they kept their oaths.

So many lying tales which discredit the fair memory of Sir Henry Morgan have been told of that expedition that I must tell the real truth of it, to show how great was his leadership, and how by his bravery and sagacity was brought to safe conclusion the greatest of all the enterprises of the buccaneers. Having suffered such great loss at the taking of San Lorenzo, and being under the necessity of leaving strong garrison to hold it, as well as the island of St. Catherine's, there were but twelve hundred men at his disposal.

With these he had to pass through a jungle filled with savage Indians and offering every opportunity for ambuscade, depending on the two bandits whom we held prisoners for guidance. At the end of twelve days' marching he planned to take a city defended by five times our number. In that great heat and with only jungle-paths to follow, we could drag no artillery nor carry store of provision; so each man took rations for one day and for arms only a long buccaneer musket, cutlas and a pair of pistols, together with as great weight of powder and shot as he could carry. Wildairs, much to his distress, was left in command at San Lorenzo, to care for Radburn, to whom the governor's wine was bringing strength again, and to fight off any force which might come from Cartagena to harass our rear.

So with light hearts and the sure determination to succeed we set out, my good friend and admiral again show-

ing his regard for me by assigning me to command the advance-guard, giving me a laughing caution not greedily to take all the fighting to myself. I had two hundred men with me and one of the bandits, who had been fully warned that he would be the first to die at evidence of treachery; Sir Henry keeping the other—who was his brother—with him in the van, promising to kill him by inches if my man misled us.

The first part of our journeying was not so irksome, as we ascended the river in canoes, the greatest part of our discomfort coming from the fact that we were so packed together that no man save those who paddled had freedom to use his limbs. For five days we traveled thus, but it is no part of my purpose to detail all our hardships. Of provision we had none; and the Spaniards, whom we had hoped to overcome and so come by their camp-supplies, abandoned all thought of fight and retreated, taking care to burn what they could not remove, so that we were fain to draw our belts tighter for emptiness, and by the fifth day were well reduced in strength and energy.

But our admiral was everywhere, stimulating those who would have fallen from very weakness by his words of promise. And when at last we came upon a small store of meal it was he who stood over it with drawn sword and saw that the weakest had the greater share, while he and all his officers went hungry.

You can well believe that even with such seasoned men there was much murmuring; but on every side there was but thick jungle, from which we were ever watched by the jealous eyes of Indians; and each man knew that to fall out meant death by cruel torment. So for four days more we marched in the greatest hardship, the heat being like a furnace and the heavy rainstorms giving no relief; for then we must ever be at pains to keep our store of powder dry.

We were like to drop with famine, when suddenly before us lay stretched out the great South Sea, and at our feet the high steeples of the city of Pan-

ama. Forgetting all our pains and weariness we hastened to the plain below us; but had the Spaniards been aware of our condition and fallen on us we must have been killed for lack of strength to use our arms. Fearing to attack us while we were in such close formation they resorted to a strange stratagem which led to their undoing, for it gave us the nourishment for lack of which we must have perished.

They had gathered a great herd of wild bulls, and these they forced their slaves to drive at us as we came in the plain, hoping thus to throw us in such disorder that their mailed horsemen—of whom they had near a thousand—could ride us down; but with a cry that our enemies sent us food our men received that charge, shooting many of the great beasts and alarming the others so with their shouts and musketry that only one of them reached our ranks alive. He, attracted by our red ensign, made for it, but did no harm to any one of us save a bandit guide whom he gored; but that was small loss, for now that Panama lay before us we had no further need of him. And so a wild bull did more than ever yet a Spaniard had done, for he trailed our standard in the dust, for which I afterward grilled his marrow-bones, which I esteem a great luxury. The Spaniards, seeing their stratagem had failed, withdrew toward the city, playing upon us with their cannon, to which we gave small heed, for they were ever poor marksmen.

The report of how we took the city after hard fighting in which we lost above two hundred men and killed a thousand Spaniards, has been so often told—for Morgan sent full despatches to his majesty, which were posted for all men to see—that I need not repeat it; but much false calumny has been set afloat about our sojourn in the city. We had taken it in fair fight, against great odds of numbers; but so poor-spirited were the Spaniards that they sought to rob us by setting it in flames; and we had much ado to quell the conflagration, blowing up many fair houses

with gunpowder; and in the confusion many of the inhabitants perished. But this was not our desire, arising rather from the deceitfulness of the enemy; for by their death we lost much good ransom.

Sir Henry had become a great commander, ever with solicitude for his men; so, when they had subdued the flames, he ordered them all to be gathered in the market-place, and made them a fair speech. He warned them to drink no drop of wine, it having come to his ears that it had all been poisoned, and at this there was much grumbling. And then, after providing for watch and ward, he divided them in detachments of two hundred each to fetch in prisoners and search for the treasure which they had hidden.

Strict orders he gave further that the prisoners were to be brought before him; and, despite all assertions to the contrary, it is a matter of my own knowledge that no one of them was tortured until he had been given fair chance to make a voluntary confession of where he had hidden that which was ours by right of conquest. But these Spaniards were such obstinate dogs that our men were fair worn out with many of them before we could induce them to confess; and I dare say that each ounce of the treasure which we gained required an hour of questioning.

And for the women our admiral was most solicitous, knowing that his men were but rough people; and every one that had pretension to beauty or was of quality was strictly confined in the great nunnery, where no man had access save those he could trust. It was a strange thing that these very ladies, who had so greatly feared our coming because of the horrid tales that had been told of us, when they found that we were not monsters, but rather very comely men, were most gracious to us; and many of them, when we retired to Jamaica, would have willingly accompanied us.

One of them, who was of exceeding great beauty, was like to have caused our admiral great embarrassment; for through his courtesy and gallantry to-

ward her she became so enamored of him that she was not minded to return to her Spanish husband, who was the richest man in all that town. He had, in spite of our precautions, been able to escape with his treasure; but Sir Henry, although he was much smitten with her charms, remembered ever his duty to his king and held her to large ransom. In this way he became possessed of a fair half of the Don's large fortune for the common purse, at great expense to his own feelings; and while I greatly admired his uprightness, I have often wondered if Charles Stuart would have displayed so high a sense of duty.

As for the priests, we had good cause to harry them, for not only had we the memory of how they had always maltreated such of our men as had come into their hands, torturing them most grievously and burning them alive, to stimulate us; but it soon came to our knowledge that through Fernando Vasquez we had lost a great treasure. He had but lately come to Panama, with such powers under the Inquisition that even the governor feared him; and when he knew of our coming he had laden a great galleon with much of the treasure of the church; and, taking aboard all of the nuns from the convent, put to sea without victualing the ship, leaving a most insolent message that they preferred death from thirst and starvation to falling into our hands, and that it gave him great joy to save the implements of gold from sacrilege. This to us was a great misfortune, for it was not only a great loss, but Fernando Vasquez was so praised for his stratagem that it gave him greater power and caused his appointment as Grand Inquisitor of the Indies. But I would that I could have laid my two hands on him in Panama.

So occupied were we with gathering the treasure that it was six weeks before we started back for San Lorenzo; but that we had gleaned well was shown by our baggage-train. The loads of gold and silver required no less than one hundred and seventy-five sturdy mules to carry them; and of lading

bales of silks and costly merchandise I thought we should never be at an end. And one thing I must set down to show our admiral's fealty to the king; for surely to no ambitious man ever came greater temptation.

So great had been our victory under his leadership that the men would have followed him anywhere; and, more than that, seeing how well they had prospered under his strict discipline, they called a great meeting and would have made him king, proposing that we take the ships in the harbor and sail in the South Seas, taking some fair land for our own territory.

Even the English adventurers, who had ever been the king's men and resided at his court, were for pressing this upon him; but even while Morgan listened to them and argued his duty to King Charles, he bade me privily take a score of men whom I could trust and go to the harbor. When I returned from carrying out his order there was hoarse murmuring from the men, for Sir Henry had told them plainly that while he held the king's commission he fought and plundered for him. The men would, I believe, have mutinied, carrying him to be their ruler by force of arms; but when I signaled to him that all had been carried out according to his orders, in a voice of thunder he bade them be silent.

"And now, gentlemen and good comrades all, I thank you for the honor you would do to me," he said more quietly. "In your victory you do not realize that you tempt me to dishonor; for what I have done was under the king's commission. You know that I have ever tried to spare your lives; and now, if you will look to the harbor, you'll see that I have done more than that; I have saved you from dishonoring your great deeds by treachery to our king." So, turning, they saw that there was no hope of putting to sea to found their empire; for by the admiral's order I had set fire to every piece of shipping; and in the fast falling darkness the town was growing as light as day from the flames which consumed them.

Our returning march was a different matter from our coming. We had taken great numbers of Africans to do the labor; and with six hundred prisoners whose ransom had not come we marched gaily from the sacked and ruined city. So great was the terror of being taken to slavery in Jamaica that before three days were out the ransom for all save some rascally priests had come, and we had given them their freedom. That we hanged the priests was held greatly against us by our arch enemy Fernando Vasquez; but I have always maintained that it was his own niggardliness in refusing to part with ransom for them which was responsible for it; for as slaves they would not have been worth transporting; so much had they been maimed by our men in the questioning that they could hardly stand.

At San Lorenzo we passed long enough to put the place to ransom, sending word to Santa Martha that unless they paid we would destroy the castle; but they were so obstinate that nothing would they send, so we dismantled it and proceeded to St. Catherine's. And right glad I was to grasp the hands of Wildairs and Radburn; the latter had so far recovered that he suffered no discomfort save a vast increase of his thirst, which I had always thought quite unquenchable enough before.

So great had been their fortune that three great Spanish ships had fallen to them as prizes with little trouble on their part; for coming from Spain they knew not that St. Catherine's was ours until they had carefully warped into the river. So the garrison had fallen on them unawares, finding great comfort in the cargoes of wines and provisions which they carried. In these and our own ships we carried our plunder and the slaves; and at St. Catherine's we made fair division, in this, for the first time, meeting with disension.

The buccaneers found little consolation for being called king's men when Sir Henry announced that so much was to be withheld as royal tax; and they

threatened to seize it all and hold St. Catherine's for their own. And then again I saw how great a man we had for our leader. Foreseeing that their loyalty would be weak when their pockets were assailed he had contrived that the most precious of the plunder should be laded on three of the fastest ships; so when he saw that the men would not listen to reason he summoned a few of us whom he knew he could trust; and when the discontented and mutinous members of our company were carousing and hatching treachery we quietly sailed away at night for Port Royal, and thus saved the treasure for the king.

It was our plan to stop long enough only to water and victual our fleet before setting out for England; for we knew that there was grave danger from the mutineers; but when we sailed into the harbor we were received with salvos of great guns in salute, and the commander of the troops came off to welcome us, bearing important despatches.

It was one of these that caused a change in our plans; for under the great seal of England was the announcement that his gracious majesty, confiding in the strong devotion of his beloved Sir Henry Morgan, did appoint him Governor of his island of Jamaica, to exercise authority in his name, and most particularly to repress with all severity those insolent pirates who had without conscience so lamentably harried the dominions of his royal cousin, his Catholic Majesty the King of Spain. And there again Sir Henry showed his great superiority; for to me it appeared as if King Charles had sent command for him to execute himself; but being of a great intelligence he quickly caught the meaning, and prepared to act accordingly.

It was in great state he went ashore, taking up his residence in the house which Mansfelt had built from the moneys of which he cheated his men; and his first care was to preserve good order in the colony. The gibbets, which had fallen in decay—for the colonel had hardly dared to hang a common thief for fear of falling foul of the ad-

miral's displeasure—he had strengthened and extended against the coming of the mutineers; and then he so arranged affairs that the king himself in London hardly lived in greater pomp and luxury.

XII.

It was strange and admirable to see how His Excellency the Governor of Jamaica exactly understood the meaning of the king's communications; for I, who was his secretary, would have construed them differently. By a great treaty which had been signed in some place in Europe, there was to be no further war between the English and the Spaniards in the Indies; and it seemed to me that in the very plainest language his excellency was constantly commanded to maintain that peace; and, above all, to repress sternly those ungodly men who harried the Spanish possessions.

That he so understood it in part, I know, for when the mutineers returned from St. Catherine's and would have raised a great row, impeaching him for a thief and traitor, he promptly quelled their complaining by taking a score of them and hanging them on his new gallows-tree at the Point. But, on the other hand, Jamaica without the revenue received from the gains of the buccaneers would have been but a poor place, and yielded little to the king or governor, had not his excellency been of such great intelligence that he found a speedy solution of that difficulty.

The possessions of Spain by land were by that infamous treaty recognized as inviolable; but Sir Henry could see nothing in his instructions which prevented him, as Admiral of the Indies, from levying a just tax upon their commerce. So, not to bear too lordly on his old comrades the buccaneers, he steadfastly looked the other way when ships were fitted out in Port Royal to put to sea at the season when the plate fleet sailed for Cadiz. And when the ships returned, laden with rich spoil which they had gained without landing at any Spanish port, he graciously relaxed the discipline of the

place until Port Royal bore the aspect it was wont to wear when his own fleets returned, and there was great revelry of the worthy buccaneers.

At these times he was never stern with those who paid fair tribute, and hanged only such as would have cheated the king of his tax. I, who had the collecting, saw that in many ways it was a better method than the old one; for now that the Spaniards had no fear of us on land they were at liberty to squeeze the greater amount from the countries; and the biggest share came to us from their shipments with far less pains and labor. Radburn and I held grave debate upon it when he was fit for speech; but unfortunately he still suffered such thirst from that arrow-wound that it kept him busy both day and night to quench it; so for the most part being always drunk, he was unable to understand that our old leader was dealing fairly by his comrades.

And in our power and consequence I had but one thing to grieve me. So great was the governor's position and so many his cares and anxieties that it seemed to me he sought relief too much in wine—for now he had not the difficulty of maintaining a captaincy or discipline with his own hand—and the governor's house was often the scene of revels well-nigh as boisterous as those of the common people in the town. That, I fear, was the cause of many of the foul stories which have been put in circulation against him. With me he was always most just and gentle, keeping me always near him, even when he made his staid progress through the colony, when we went with much pomp and a great retinue of slaves.

It was on one of these journeys that I became minded to settle down and marry; Sir Henry would not hear of my leaving him, so I built a fair house of stone at Green Bay, which was separated from the disorder of Port Royal by the harbor, and yet so close that I was ever at his right hand. For this he granted me much land and the use of all the king's slaves and convicts to make the buildings, saying that when

the king had made him an earl—which I knew they were in correspondence over—he might come to be my neighbor.

So we thought to pass our days together, although Mistress Lucy Walcott, who had promised to come to dwell with me as my wife when my house was finished, expressed a pretty jealousy of my love for him; and in our peaceful regulation of the affairs of the colony and gathering great revenue for the king from preying on the Spanish galleons, the years slipped on. Jamaica was considered a most unwholesome place, for many died of fevers; but everything passed us by harmlessly, and we were come to great fortune from our forays and the part of the revenue which we kept for ourselves. But still Sir Henry was not satisfied, saying that he was of even less rank than I, who was a baronet by birth, and ever jogged the memory of the king that he should be given an earldom for his services.

To this the king finally made reply that from an earl as governor he should expect greater revenue; and Morgan, taking the hint, asked him how much in ready money he required. The king, as we had news from England, where Wildairs had gone to keep watch for us, was aging rapidly; but his necessities were never greater, and he was in sore need of money. The gentlemen adventurers had carried back such tales that he believed we had but to shake the trees to gather doubloons; and it was a tremendous sum he named in answer. Even Morgan, with all the riches he had gathered, could not meet it; but as we had ever been good comrades, and I saw that he was sore vexed, I offered him my store to add to his. This he would not listen to, but finally at my pleading he consented, upon condition that I should sail with him.

"And when I am a belted earl, we'll set about repaying you by getting the king to restore the Renshaw estates," he said generously. But I thought little of them, so greatly had I prospered under his leadership. I had been only

a month married, but never had I refused to follow Henry Morgan. So, leaving my wife to regulate the affairs of the estate—to which she was well accustomed, as her father, who had been a Cromwell man and come out at the Restoration, was a planter on the island—we set sail again for England, bearing in the state cabin the price of an earldom for Henry Morgan, who had come to the Indies as a slave, and through his industry and honesty had come to this great position.

Many nights, as we paced the decks during that long voyage, we fought over again our battles, my dear comrade being generous to assign me great credit for my fidelity to him, and promising ever to hold me in warm remembrance as he climbed the ladder of his ambitions. We built many fine castles in the air, of how we should get power in England; for the colonies had grown too small a place for him; and in all of them I had due place, for that was ever Henry Morgan's way.

Wildairs had been advised of our coming that he might arrange for our reception as befitted Morgan's dignity; and oftentimes we discussed whether we should first salute, or wait until his rank as a royal governor had been acknowledged. It was with great expectations that we came up the Thames, and Morgan laughed as he pointed to the gibbets on the banks, where the bodies of poor wretches hung in chains as a warning to other pirates.

"But for our good fortune we might be hanging there," he said gaily. "They have come to such ending because they held themselves too cheaply; for he who would live by taking the possessions of others must take enough to make himself feared and lend dignity to his profession." And underneath his raillery I saw the truth of his philosophy, for that will be the fact until the ending of this world. But as we approached the great city the air seemed full of misfortune, for there was no sound of gaiety on shore, and all was gloomy and gave us apprehension.

Even as our anchor dropped into the

muddy water of the Thames, Wildairs, white of face, came on board from a wherry and taking us aside to the state cabin told us that for three weeks Charles Stuart had been in his tomb; and that James the Second, who was a Catholic, reigned in his stead.

At this we saw our great schemes vanish in thin air; and Wildairs earnestly advised us to 'bout ship and return to the Indies, where we could safely make composition with our new sovereign. But Morgan, vowing that he would not return to be a pirate and must have a renewal of his commission at the least, dressed himself grandly and put out for shore, charging us to remain on board the ship that he might have an avenue of escape should the king be obstinate.

I watched his great barge move away, he in the stern looking the brave and fearless man that he was; and he called back confidently to us to be of good cheer, that all would yet come right. But soon my heart misgave me, for from another ship that lay neighbor to us a boat put off; and in it as passenger I could have sworn that I saw the face of that bird of ill omen, the Padre Fernando Vasquez, Grand Inquisitor of the Spanish Indies. I would that I had loosed our ship's guns on him and sent him to his death in the water of the Thames; but Wildairs restrained me and so we let him go.

While we waited I learned of the great change which had come to England: the people grumbling that a Catholic king was over them, and that there was like to be speedy change; but still he held the power, and it is but the work of a moment to order the hanging of a man. I feared so greatly for Morgan that I was ill at ease; and when in the night a black barge passed our ship and a muffled cry for help seemed to come from it I was not to be restrained and ordered a boat that we might give pursuit.

It was some time before we were able to draw near them, my men all armed and ready for any desperate attempt; and looking up I saw the grim walls of the Tower of London above

me, while the warders from the loop-holed towers ordered us to stand off. With our small crew there was no hope of rescue, and so we were forced to lie on our oars and see by the light of flickering lanterns Sir Henry Morgan under strict guard led in through that grim portal called the Traitors' Gate, committed on the charge of high treason in that he had levied war upon the Spaniards when the countries were at peace.

XIII.

In the position I now found myself it was necessary to turn to Wildairs for counsel and guidance; for having spent the best years of my life in fighting against the king's enemies—and so long as the Spaniards have treasure such I shall always hold them to be in spite of their rascally treaties—I had no knowledge of the ways of courts. I was first for devising a stratagem by which we might surprise the Tower and so rescue our admiral; but this Wildairs would not listen to, and insisted that our first duty was to remove the treasure to a place of safety; it being likely that the king's officers might seize the ship.

"Dear old lad, the sword which served you so well in the Indies is useless now; but no armor has yet been fashioned which this softer metal will not contrive to penetrate," he said as he patted the fat sacks of gold. "Men may call it the root of evil; but all desire it, and with it we may pick locks and open doors which against all other weapons are impregnable."

Knowing this was good advice—for so hard had we struggled for it that for every ounce of that cargo more than one man had died—we labored through that night to land it. Even as we carried it it seemed to me that it was cursed; for the yellow fingers of ghosts of Spaniards were ever plucking at the sacks, and the faces of men long dead at our hands who had striven to keep it from us peered at me from the darkness and gibbered and jeered that it would turn to dross.

Bad nights in my life I had known a plenty; for often in our forays we had lain down in the fear that the dawn would bring us death or capture; but I believe that night to have been the worst. Perhaps the memory of Fernando Vasquez, who had cursed us heartily by bell and book for heretics, raised those glibbering dead men to torment me; for they whispered that all my pains would come to naught, and that the treasure with which we had hoped to buy Henry Morgan's earldom would be of no avail to save him from a miserable death.

Wildairs had privately secured against our coming lodgings near the court with people to be trusted; and it was there we hid ourselves with our treasure, deeming our very nearness to our enemies would give us security. By day we lay close behind drawn shutters; for we speedily learned that there was a warrant out for me; sallying out only at night to hold consultation with those who would overthrow King James and fetch a Protestant prince from Holland to rule over them.

I always counseled haste in these proceedings, for it takes but a minute to write the order to hang a man, and I thought that delay would ill serve us; for nearly every day we saw the Spanish ambassador go in state to audience with the king, and with him was Fernando Vasquez. I knew that this boded ill for Henry Morgan; but the Stuarts were ever weak men and obstinate, so that the time dragged on, and in spite of all their importunities he was not brought to trial.

Meanwhile we laid many plans for his rescue, expending great sums in bribery and making friends within the Tower; so that I was able to have speech with him in the dungeon where he lay heavily fettered, in spite of the king's command that he was to be kept in solitude. Truly it was a pitiful thing to see one who had done such great things for his country brought to such a position; and could he have had his freedom in those times he would have risen high; for there was a throne to be had for the asking, and he had ever

shown his hatred of the Catholics by warring on the Spaniards.

That he was neither brought to trial nor summarily dealt with puzzled us not a little; for we heard from friends at court that his name was ever on the ambassador's lips, and that Vasquez was often closeted with the king in private audience. Neither had our ship been molested, but lay at easy distance from the Tower. I kept the crew under generous pay, trusting that if the worst should come and our admiral be brought to execution, we might by a bold stroke attack the guard and snatch him from the hurdle.

By such lavish use of gold that our great store was well-nigh spent, I had so arranged that immediate news should be brought to me of any change in his position; and so I passed the weary weeks in waiting, finding the cursed inaction wearing me to skin and bone, and thinking longingly of the good days we had lived together, often near perishing from thirst and hunger, but always free men and able to fight openly. Many plans we made and many plots we hatched; but in it all I have but one memory which it gratifies me to recall: and that is that it was Henry Morgan's treasure which did much to drive from his throne the false Stuart who betrayed him. For it supported those who plotted for the Prince of Orange.

Once I was near to success in freeing my dear admiral, for I had bought his warders so that he was to have the chance of escape; but on that very night, as I waited near the gate, I saw Fernando Vasquez enter in all haste and soon heard that he had brought an order from the king that special irons should be fitted on the prisoner and the guard doubled. I doubt not that some one had betrayed us; for in that web of conspiracy we knew not whom to trust, and there were many who, fearing to lose all, were careful to carry water on both shoulders.

At last, when both my gold and patience were well-nigh spent, I received word that there was something strange afoot—that an order had come for Mor-

gan's transfer from the Tower to Newgate Prison, as he was to be tried as a common pirate. Word was also brought that, as he was no longer a prisoner of state but a common felon, there would be no guard of soldiers, but only the thief-takers, who would be easy to overcome. But for that I should have summoned half of our ship's company to our aid; but thinking it small matter to subdue such cravens we depended on ourselves, with only a half-dozen of our seamen.

Never was an ambuscade or onfall more carefully planned than this, for the stake was Henry Morgan's life, and we carefully posted ourselves in a narrow street through which they must pass, while at the waterside close at hand we had a boat in waiting. Wildairs and I took each one side of the street, and posted our men to pistol the horses of the coach in which they would transfer him, while we should fall on his captors and after killing them cut our way to safety.

Word had come that the transfer would be made at midnight; for in those troublous times they feared to draw attention to prisoners in the Tower; and we were at our posts before ten, seeing the coach enter the great gate of that gloomy prison. It was good once more to have a sword in the hand which for long had been only used to pay out gold in bribery, and I felt myself the match for twenty men. But as we waited I grew sick with apprehension, fearing that we had been cheated, and that it might have been the hangman in that coach, summoned to do his grisly work within the Tower. But after waiting such an interminable time that I was sure the dawn must be close at hand we were put on the alert by the lowering of the great drawbridge, and the coach came out and drove toward us.

Exactly as we planned so carefully the horses were brought down in confusion, and the coachman who drove them was thrown headlong beneath their hoofs, where he was speedily kicked to death in their agonies. But Wildairs and I had no thought for him,

and wrenching open the doors of the coach we soon despatched the fools who were so terrified that they only sat and bawled for the watch to come to their assistance. Morgan was out in a twinkling, cursing the fetters which impeded him; and in a moment we should have been in the boat, when Wildairs cried out that we were betrayed.

From the ground about us strange creatures who looked like ghosts and were as silent rose up in numbers, habited as I had never seen men before; for over each head was a white sack with small holes for the eyes. Otherwise they were clothed all in black, and I took them for some fools who would play a trick upon us; but Wildairs with a shout that he should never yield alive rushed on them. And then I saw that they were not in jest, for though they fought in silence they used their swords and cudgels in deadly earnest, and not knowing whom I fought I used my blade as never I had before. It was a strange fight which we had there in that narrow dark street of London; for there was none of the tumult and outcry which we had been wont to hear.

Morgan, weighted down with chains, was helpless; but even his good sword would not have availed against these silent figures who swarmed upon us, using dirk and rapier against our men, but with me only beating down my sword with cudgels. Never a sound came from them, but I knew that they were under discipline and needed no further orders; for while I killed two of them with my sword there was no attempt to stab me, while all their endeavor was to make me prisoner.

Wildairs they pressed hard; and though he fought with skill, taunting them for cowards and torturers, they speedily overcame him and he fell pierced by a dozen swords. Of how it ended I knew nothing; for suddenly a thousand stars seemed to dance before my eyes and then all grew dark; but even as I fell I thought that before me was the face of the Padre Fernando Vasquez.

I do not know how long I lay un-

conscious, for when I again came in the world I was still in darkness; but underneath me the wooden floor on which I lay rose and fell with the lift of the sea, and I knew I was on ship-board. I gave a shout of joy, believing that we had won away and were safe out of England; but when I would have raised my hands to my head which was paining me and felt the size of a barrel from the blow which felled me, I found my wrist restrained and the clank of iron told me I was a fettered prisoner.

The horrors of the days or years—I know not which—that followed, I have ever tried to forget, but they are burned into my memory. My captors had care that I should not die, for they bound up my wounds and cared for me; but my attendants were always dumb, giving no answer when I spoke to them; and by the feeble rays of the lantern which they carried I saw that they were habited as had been our adversaries, wearing always those white hoods which hid their faces, but with eyes which gleamed savagely through the slits.

I knew that I was confined deep in a ship's hold, for I could smell the foul bilge and hear the water beating on the walls of wood; but so securely was I chained that I was helpless, and not a ray of light came to my prison to tell me whether it was day or night. My own voice was the only one I heard; for though I implored for news of where I was and what had happened, or cursed my captors in the vilest terms, they ever maintained that awful silence, giving me food and caring for me not unkindly; but withholding any word of speech.

How I lived through that time will ever be a mystery; but live I did, to my great sorrow, until the increasing heat and the odor of the Spice Islands which penetrated even to my prison told me that we were once more near the Indies I loved so well. Lying there in the darkness it brought back visions of my past life and half-remembered stories told by comrades who had been prisoners to the Spaniards, and then I knew

the worst; for they had told of the horrors of the secret prison where no man spoke and of the masked attendants. Familiars they were called, these men who did such dastardly offices that they were ashamed to show their faces; and from that I knew that I was prisoner to the Catholics, and at the mercy of the Grand Inquisitor, Fernando Vasquez.

XIV.

When finally, after what seemed an eternity of darkness and silence, the noise of the saluting cannon and the rattling of the anchor-cable as it went through the hawse-pipes announced that we had reached a harbor; two of the familiars of the Inquisition undid the chain which fastened my fetters to the ring-bolt on the floor of my prison, and I was led staggering to the deck. The blaze of the tropic sun was like a heavy blow to eyes which had so long seen nothing but the occasional feeble glimmer of a lantern; but when I shrank back I was mercilessly beaten by my silent captors and forced into the open.

Gradually my sight returned, and I saw that the ship had come to anchor in a harbor before a walled town, on which the castles on two great hills frowned down. Gradually the scene came back as a dim memory, and I knew that I had been brought a prisoner where I had hoped one day to come with an army of brave men at my back—to the city of Cartagena, the greatest and strongest of all the Spanish places on the Main. But I had small time to look at it; for from another hatchway, guarded by a half-dozen of those same loathsome familiars and sinking from weakness and a heavy weight of manacles, was brought a second prisoner.

At first I could not credit my poor, half-blinded eyes; but when I looked again I gave a cry of pain which my own suffering had never drawn from my lips; for in that bent form and wasted face I recognized all that their cruelty had left of Henry Morgan. And then I wished that I had been choked before I had uttered it; for raising my

eyes to the poop I saw the face of Fernando Vasquez, and on it was a look of savage triumph.

Small time I had to look about, however; for we were soon taken to the shore, and after short parley admitted through the water-gate. Around us, as if they would shield us from sight as we were dragged through the city, was a swarm of those white-hooded familiars; but I could see that all people dreaded them, for none remained to gape at us, but scuttled into the houses as if the plague were approaching. Through a large square they dragged us, giving us no opportunity to have speech with each other, and then through a door which opened noiselessly into a stone passage.

With no gentle hands they dragged me on, down a long flight of steps until I felt that we were in the bowels of the earth; and when I was left alone it was in a foul dungeon where daylight had never entered. How long I lay there, fettered and helpless, I never knew, for there was no light by which I might count the days, while the only sound which ever reached my ears was the cry of some poor wretch in torment. Always the same hooded jailers brought me food and drink, dumb as if the tongues had been torn from their mouths, but while I heard no sound and lay in utter darkness I knew that eyes which were like those of a cat to see without light watched me unceasingly.

That they were not minded that I should die I knew; for I was given good food to eat and even wine; but rather would I have starved and heard the sound of human voices. Of Morgan's fate I knew nothing save that he was a prisoner; but often I listened eagerly when shrieks from the torture-chamber penetrated my dungeon, fearing to recognize his voice. But I was fated soon to see him, for in the due form of the Inquisition we were brought to stand our trial, arraigned together before a railing in the great hall and closely guarded by those silent familiars. Sitting at their ease before us were three priests: Fernando Vasquez

and two others; and the light in their eyes showed us that they were not there to judge but to condemn.

The proceedings were gone through with in all formality, a secretary drowning through his nose a long accusation, and in it I saw the work of Fernando Vasquez, which gave us into the hands of the Inquisition and not to trial before a court martial. Never was such a lot of nonsense concocted; for it laid no stress upon our having plundered as pirates—which the Spaniards held to be true, being but narrow-minded men—but did accuse us of employing spells and enchantment, whereby with only small forces we had ever overcome great numbers.

Every victory we had won was cited, robbing us of the credit of Morgan's generalship and our own prowess by this silly accusation; and they gave the testimony of many witnesses who had seen hosts of devils with hoofs and horns fighting in our ranks, which was most utter falsehood, but saved them from the charge of cowardice.

Even the poor joke of the buccaneers in shooting the organ-pipes was cited against us; for they held that owing to the intercession of their priests the Spaniards had been able to take St. Catherine's, while all had heard the devil's hosts howling with rage as they flew over them, because they could not harm them, owing to the protection of Holy Mother Church. When this was finished, Vasquez looked at Morgan; and there was a cruel smile on his lips when he asked him if he was prepared to confess and throw himself on the mercy of Mother Church. Morgan, in spite of his great weight of chains, straightened to his full height and looked at him fearlessly.

"Sirs, I know that I have come to that pass where words will not avail me," he said defiantly. "You claim that I have ever been aided by demons, but surely none such can aid me now; for demons sit in judgment on me. If you would know how we won our battles, take these fetters from us, give us each a sword, and then let forty of your garrison come against us."

Chained and helpless as we were, it gave me joy to see their faces blanch from fear at the bare suggestion; and one fat priest made as if he would get under the table, muttering the while in what I took for Latin, for I knew no word of it. But Vasquez, motioning to the guards to gather closer, ordered that we be removed, and said that he would hear us on another day, when the officers had brought us to a more humble and penitent frame of mind.

The next day I was again led out, not to the great hall of audience, but to a chamber I was to know too well. Of daylight there was none; for such deeds as were done there were not for the sun to look upon; but flaring torches stuck in sconces on the walls showed the horrid implements of the torturer and revealed the malice in the eyes which watched us. Much I had seen of questioning; but it was ever of the rough and ready sort—a cord about the head, or lighted fuses placed between the fingers. But here were all the means to search out every quivering nerve, employed by men who through much practise could make the most of them.

Morgan, pale of face but resolute of mien, had been carried there before me and now lay stretched out, bare of his clothes, and the ropes which bound him each with a stout stick twisted in it. I looked to receive like treatment; but the ingenuity of those devils in inflicting torment was shown in that they but bound me to a great pillar where I must look on him; for well they knew that watching his great agony was worse for me than if they had laid me in his place.

How many hours I stood there bound and helpless, I could never tell; for minutes seemed hours when passed in watching the executioner at his grim work, twisting each stick slowly until the cords cut into the flesh, while all the time Fernando Vasquez urged his victim to confess how he had used the hosts of darkness to fight against his Catholic majesty. Many times I aided his endeavors, begging my comrade to confess to anything to be relieved of

his torments; but nothing passed those set lips but groans of agony as hour by hour those devils did their work, while a secretary took down all my words as evidence against us.

Morgan was a man of desperate resolution and great strength; but, knowing that the strongest man would be relieved by death if they ventured beyond the limit, they gave over, having gained nothing from him but curses and defiance. They loosed us both, but it was I who fell fainting on the stones at the conclusion; and when I again was conscious, I was in my dungeon, the cries of some poor wretch of lesser courage coming to me from the torture-chamber.

And this for many days was our daily portion; mine to look on while they tortured my poor comrade with every one of their vile appliances. The rack which stretched his tall frame a good four inches, the strappado which raised his weight slowly from the floor by his manacled wrists, and all their devilish inventions were employed. The man to whom we owed our sad plight, who had plotted against us in the Indies and at the English court, was ever a witness of the torturing, enjoying every groan which the cruel torments wrung from his victim, and enhancing every pang by reciting the details of how he gained his mastery over us.

Our capture was of his contriving, for in the slough of intrigue and plotting—where I was but a novice—he was a master hand. He jeered at all of the methods of rescue I had planned in England, telling me that he knew of them almost as they were conceived, and named men whom I had bought or held for friends as traitors who were in his pay.

The transfer of Morgan was of his contriving, as was the ambuscade; for when we arrived at ten that fatal night the Inquisition officers were already secreted in the neighboring houses, while the Spanish ship in which they came to London lay ready in the Thames. And so while Morgan writhed before my eyes while I was bound fast to watch him, the Grand Inquisitor with his

biting tongue inflicted graver tortures on me; for all through his recital I knew that my own blundering and stupidity had brought my comrade to this wretched pass.

Long practise had made them so expert in their business that there was no chance that they might pass the limit. And day after day, when I thought that they had gone too far and that death would mercifully come to Morgan, they ceased their work in time to save him, carrying his poor distorted frame back to his dungeon and working over him to preserve the spark of life against another day. With me, save for my harsh imprisonment, they used no bodily torture, well knowing that in watching my comrade's suffering I was made miserable enough.

Strange happenings there were in that secret prison of the Inquisition, and I came to know that by the methods of the torture-chamber Fernando Vasquez came by great knowledge of things beyond the ken of honest men. Witches and wizards—of whom they arrested great numbers—mumbled between the twistings of the rack strange secrets of their trade into his ready ears, until in all the world there was no man who knew more of the black art of sorcerers than he.

And while he ever held that they were tortured for their soul's benefit, I know that it was that he might learn their secrets and so employ them for our undoing; for by no mortal means could he have vanquished Henry Morgan. But even with all his sorcery he could not avail against the spirit of the man; and though they employed all their art of torture, distending him almost to bursting by their water torment; blistering him with hot irons and plates of glowing charcoal, and crushing him with their thumbscrews and Spanish boots, never a word of confession could they wring from him.

Always he maintained that he had fought as a gallant gentleman, employing no means but the bravery of his men to accomplish his great victories; but this, of course, they never could admit; for it threw too great discredit

on the Spanish arms. The memory of days had gone from me, for that time seems in my recollection to be measured by centuries. But even to their torturing there must be an end; for although a brave, strong man, Sir Henry Morgan could not forever endure such torments. And so, when by their cruelty they had made of him—who had been the comeliest man the sun had ever shone upon—but a twisted and deformed thing in which no one would have recognized the great leader whom men had clamored to follow and many women had loved, they sent him back to his dungeon to lie at peace.

And to make out the case against him they used every word of supplication which I had uttered when he was in his agony, and lest I might recant they stretched me on the rack. I had not, I fear, the strength of my dear comrade; and when the cruel thongs cut into me and the stretching made each separate joint a seat of agony I mistrust that I said much that they wished; but ever I tried to keep from making outcry that my screams might not come to his ears in the dungeon where he lay, and cause him greater pain.

Ever beside me stood Fernando Vasquez, suggesting the things which I should say and making my torture keener by whispering in my ear that it was because of my stupidity and bungling that Henry Morgan had been taken. This, I suppose, was true; but surely it was no fault of mine; for so great had been my love for my dear leader that never was there room for another in my heart.

That they had tortured me with no light hands these scars bear witness; and in the name of God they did things to make the devil joyful; but no matter what we might have said or done they would never have shown mercy to us. And so, after many days passed in utter darkness, the while they fed me well that I might not lose strength against what was before me, I was led again to the great hall of the Inquisitors, blinking like an owl in the bright light of day; and, with full twoscore

of scarecrows who had been men and women before they tasted of the sweet discipline of Mother Church, arraigned before the bar to hear the dread sentence of the Holy Inquisition.

I listened as each name was read out and each trembling wretch in turn hobbled forward to hear the words of doom—women charged with witchcraft or with Hebrew practises, and men who had uttered blasphemy or dared to criticize the Inquisition, which was the gravest crime of all.

Stripes, the galleys and imprisonment were the lot of all, until my name was called and a clerk read out my crimes: that I was convicted on my own confession of having aided and abetted in the crime of sorcery, whereby my comrades under the leadership of Henry Morgan had been able to overcome the most valiant men of Spain by summoning the hosts of darkness from the pit of hell to aid us. Then followed the reading of my punishment: that I should walk in the solemn penitential procession at the *auto da fé*, and thereafter receive at each of the four gates of the city a hundred lashes and be delivered over to the Holy Inquisition for perpetual imprisonment in such place as Fernando Vasquez might designate.

And then a deathly silence fell on all as six miserable objects were pushed forward; but I had eyes for only one. In the gaunt face so deeply lined with marks of suffering, the eyes which were wont to flash fire now so deeply sunken that they were scarcely visible, and hair which had been dark now as white as snow, I could hardly believe that I saw before me Henry Morgan; but such a one it was who answered to his name. The others were of no account to me, but all had been found guilty of heinous crimes against the Church; for I listened only to the doom of my dear comrade, hoping in our imprisonment we might be united.

The face of Vasquez when he rose to pronounce the sentence was disfigured by a savage hatred and triumph; and when he told how Morgan had obstinately resisted all effort to convert him to their idolatrous doctrines, and

had refused to confess and ask for absolution, his words were like the hissing of a serpent. With hypocritical and lying phrases he related that they had labored hard for his soul's salvation; but that finding him so obstinate a heretic that they could not prevail upon him, he was to be delivered to the secular authorities, of whom they begged that there might be no shedding of blood.

XV.

For many days I lay in the dungeon, hearing no voice and seeing no face; for only the dumb and masked familiars came to me, bringing me food but denying me all information, until the unwonted noise of many footsteps and the clanking of fetters in the corridor warned me that the day of punishment had come. Then, after throwing over me the *san benito*, that hideous cloak of yellow cloth which marks the victim of the Inquisition, I was taken to the great courtyard of the palace to join the pitiful procession of companions in misfortune.

There were above fifty of us marshaled there; and in that gathering of what had once been men and women one could read the dreadful and far-reaching power of the discipline of Mother Church; for none was too high or none too low to escape its application. Spaniards of noble birth and slaves from Africa; wretched Indians and half-castes, with Morgan and I of English blood, were herded there like sheep under the guard of many familiars, all wearing that livery of Satan which hid the scars and deformities gained in the torture-chamber.

The cloaks of Morgan and the five others were defaced by figures of hideous devils dancing in hot flames, which marked them as condemned to death; and the greatest bitterness I felt was that the privilege of dying beside him was denied me. In couples we were marched through many streets to the cathedral to hear a penitential mass, with me walking painfully a young maid of eighteen years who had been condemned to stripes and lifelong servi-

tude as a convent drudge, because a jealous rival had whispered that she was guilty of Hebraic practises in refusing to partake of pork. Thrice she had been tortured to make her confess her crimes and implicate her father, who being of great wealth would have been a profitable victim; for the property of all condemned reverts to Holy Church.

So, hobbling and groaning from the pain of twisted limbs, we walked and stood through that long ceremony; but of it all I remember only one figure, that of my dear comrade, who stood erect in spite of weight of fetters and disjointed limbs, his sunken eyes flashing defiance at his persecutors, who would have danced for joy to see him tremble. And then, lest I should make outcry or turn away at the last, two of their familiars seized me roughly and placed on me one of their contrivances—a cage of iron which so firmly fixed my head that it could not turn, while a gag was rammed between my jaws.

There was small need of that, for when in the square we were ranged in front of the six posts, each surrounded by its heap of fagots, nothing could have made me look away or utter protest; for I knew that it would have caused pain to Henry Morgan. And so, under that blue sky and bright sun he died, silently and bravely as he had lived. And until the flames rose about his face he kept his eyes fixed on mine, and the smile which had ever won him friendship was on his lips.

There was but one cry from all that throng of spectators who saw a brave man done to death, and that from a woman; and when I looked up I saw two familiars bearing her away, but not before I recognized her as that Spanish lady who had loved him when we took Panama. More I never heard of her; but I doubt not that she, too, was put to torture for having shown concern for one whom the Inquisition had condemned.

Now that the worst was over their punishment for me had little terror, but not one jot of it was omitted. The lashes I received gave me little pain,

for I was numbed from suffering; and it was not until I was again thrown on the moldy straw of my dungeon that the blessed relief of unconsciousness came to me.

When I revived the smith was striking off my fetters; and then they led me out through the streets of Cartagena, and to the water-gate. It was midnight, but the great tropic moon made everything as light as day; and looking up I saw that I was alone with Fernando Vasquez, whose face looked strangely like that of the devil whom he served. Under the black garment of the priest he wore the finery of a cavalier, having come, I doubt not, from some gallant adventure; for ever he led a double life—priest and profligate, holy man and devil.

Now he leered at me maliciously, and in his eyes I read that which no other man had seen and lived to tell of—the power of sorcery learned while he cloaked his torturing with the guise of the confessor. Unfettered I was, for the first time in many months, and alone with him who was the author of all our misfortunes; while ready to my hand in his belt peeped out the handle of a jeweled dagger; but under the gaze of those eyes my muscles were powerless to obey my will; and I, for the first time in all my life, knew fear. As if he read my thoughts he smiled on me, and taking from his belt the dagger he gave it to me, bidding me to work my will on him.

Suddenly my strength returned and the memory of all his wrongs to us was behind the blow I dealt him fair over the heart, stabbing him again and again; but all the time he faced me smiling and giving back not one inch; until with hair on end from very terror at his invulnerability I gave over and sank to my knees, for my legs would not support me. Then with a mocking laugh he looked at me and I would have dropped my eyes; but as I have seen a serpent charm a bird he held them fixed on his and spoke the words which bound me to the service through all eternity, pointing to the moon which stood above us.

"The Holy Inquisition has doomed you, Harry Renshaw, to perpetual imprisonment; but using power that even the Holy Office does not possess I give you back your liberty of body; but ever shall your mind and memory be slave to me. To-night your body sails for the scene of all your former glory; for I would have you tell to what end came the most malignant enemy of our true Church. And that it may be forever remembered by your ungodly comrades and their successors, it is my decree that you shall never die; but ever when the moon shines you shall live in the body of a male child descended from you, bearing the outward marks you have received in your wild life, and at the hands of those who would have saved your soul. That for lust of gold you sold it, I lay upon you that you and yours shall ever walk in poverty, bearing that about you which is of great value but which you shall have no wit to use. Now go, and with you always shall be my curse and my injunction, until the moon shall cease to shine on this world."

And then I verily believe the earth swallowed him; for while I stood there I was alone without his moving, until rough hands grasped me and led me to a boat, still clenching tightly that accursed dagger which had played me false. Like one in a daze I sailed that sea over which I had so often voyaged to great enterprises and returned in victory with Henry Morgan, the Spanish sailors treating me as one accursed and leaving me to myself, until at last, when we could see the lights from land, they placed me in a boat and sailed away.

It was broad day when I entered the harbor of Port Royal, a broken man laboring painfully at the oars and coming in poverty and rags where I had been wont to arrive to the welcome of saluting cannon and songs of triumph. But now as I hobbled to the marketplace there was no man who knew me, and old comrades cursed my impertinence when I would speak to them. Only Radburn of all the assembled buccaners was not blinded by my condi-

tion; and throwing his great arms about me he held me to him as tenderly as a mother might a child, swearing great oaths to shame the tears which rolled down his furrowed cheeks.

And then there gathered round me all that crew of rough and lawless men, listening in awed silence while I told them of the fate of Henry Morgan; and, although there were many of them who held that in his greatness and power he had cheated them of their just dues, there was not one but would have died for him. When I had finished there was such a cry for vengeance went up that even the governor in his council-chamber hastened out to hear the news and would have restrained them; but they were past control.

In the harbor lay a fleet of ships, and they were all for seizing them, vowing that they would put to sea without victualing, and despite all the treaties ever made sail for Cartagena, promising that of that cursed city not one stone should be left on another, and that not so much as a dog who had looked on Henry Morgan's death should be left alive to remember it. Above two thousand hardy men were gathered there; and as I looked on them I knew the first joy I had known for many months; for I felt that while naught could avail to save my dear comrade that they would exact a bloody vengeance.

And then that happened which showed me that without him there was no strength in our arms to fight against the incantations of Fernando Vasquez; for even as we formed to march to take the ships the very earth was seized with trembling. On every side the houses toppled down, while frenzied men and women ran screaming with terror through the streets. Even the buccaneers, who had never known fear of man or devil, were terrified; and when the shaking earth opened in great fissures at our feet many of them fell in and were forever lost to sight; for closing again the earth opened in fresh places, swallowing up the houses and the screaming citizens.

The walls of solid masonry which

Morgan had built to fortify the place crumbled like sand and fell into the sea; and then the very ocean which had always served us rose against us, sweeping in a great wave over that accursed town and drowning the cries of those who were held fast in the ruins. How it came about I never knew, but I found myself afloat in the harbor, Radburn and I clinging desperately to a great beam of wood, while all around us were men, women and children calling pitifully for help, which none could give. The ships which lay at anchor had been wrecked, or borne back on the waters as they receded and thrown upon the ruined city; but we remained afloat, drifting at the mercy of the tide.

Radburn swore mightily, for he had swallowed more of water than in all his life had passed his throat; but knowing whose hand had dealt the blow I was silent for very fear; and in the raging of the tempest which swept over us I swear I heard the mocking laugh of Fernando Vasquez. And then when earthquake, tidal wave and tempest had done his awful bidding, we floated for many hours on a sea of glass, about us the bodies of those who had been drowned that day, together with many washed out from the broken tombs. It was but sorry company; and looking back to where Port Royal once had stood in all its pride, we saw nothing but a spit of barren sand with jagged ruins of buildings which had once been fair residences and sheltered much of merrymaking.

There was no hope of rescue for us; and I, for one, rejoiced, thinking that by my death I should earn forgetfulness and bring to naught the curse of the Grand Inquisitor; but even as I relaxed my hold to let myself find peace, I felt the bottom underneath my feet; and Radburn, giving a shout of joy, clutched me and dragged me to the land. In the moonlight the place had a familiar look; and then remembrance came and told me that I had something left to live for; for by some strange chance the tide had carried us to Green Bay and I was on my own land, which the wife I had forgotten in

serving Henry Morgan had been left to rule.

Then I would have looked for her and staggering up the beach we came to where my fair house had stood; but now it had come as low as the fortunes of its master. The walls of stone were leveled, and the great beams lay in hideous confusion of tangled wreckage, while at our feet lay a white form which once had been my wife, but now was a crushed and mangled corpse to welcome me. I would have turned away to die in quietness, but in the night a little cry rang out, and Radburn with an oath bent over her and from her dead arms lifted a lusty man child, which by her love had come through that wreckage scatheless. Then madness seized me, for I knew that this, too, was Fernando Vasquez' vengeance; and drawing the dagger he had given me I sought to foil it by killing that which would bear my name. But Radburn fought me off, shielding it from me until from very weariness I fell to earth, and then I slept. And so, good friend, I've told my tale, and now—— Sir, the moon has set and there's no use fishin' more to-night.

And so, with the setting of the moon on that last night when Renshaw and I were together, the spirit of Sir Harry Renshaw prepared for another migration. The story as I have written it required many months in the telling; for this is but an outline of it. So much of it was not for ears polite that it will not stand repetition; for those men who lived only for the day and never thought of the morrow were, according to our modern standards, an ungodly crew. How much of justice there might have been in Renshaw's estimate of Morgan I could never determine; but this we know from the histories written by his enemies: that he was of marvelous ability as a leader, and had the power to make his wild followers love him.

Much more I hoped to learn from Renshaw on following moonlight nights; for never had any historian a stranger human document to study; but

while I was breakfasting on the hotel-porch the following morning the pompous negro head waiter told me that a fisherman's boy was crying out my name down at the hotel landing. Walking down there I found the boy Geoffry, apparently in great trouble; and he told me that his father was very ill, and begged that I would come to him.

As we sailed down the harbor I learned with much effort from the boy, who had always been strangely reticent and seemed but half-witted, that after getting home the previous night his father had been seized with a severe chill and was now in a high fever; so I congratulated myself that I had sent word to a physician before leaving, asking him to follow us.

I found Renshaw in bad shape, but conscious; and when I entered the stone hut which had been constructed from the materials of a ruined house adjoining which must have been a pretentious dwelling, he asked me to sit down near him and bade the boy leave us.

"I'm going fast, sir," he said. "I hope you don't mind my sendin' for you; but I ain't got no friend but you." I tried to reassure him, but he raised his hand impatiently to stop me.

"It's no use, sir; I know these fevers, an' I ain't got much time to talk," he continued. "I thought mebbe as you'd been so kind you'd see that these niggers don't rob th' boy of what little I've got to leave him. This house is mine, I reckon, an' th' boat; an' if you'll pull out that box under the bed you'll find some papers in it. I ain't got no book learnin', an' I can't read 'em; but my dad allus said they proved it."

I did as he asked me, finding an old iron chest of curious workmanship which I unlocked with a key which Renshaw kept slung about his neck by a lanyard. A lot of odds and ends lay on the top; and when I had tossed them out my eyes fairly stuck out with wonder; for lying on top of a mass of yellow documents was a dagger, its handle so encrusted with diamonds that it was worth a fortune. Renshaw looked at it indifferently, and when I told him

that it alone would make Geoffry rich he smiled.

"It's only an old, glass-handled knife," he said. "It's the papers I want you to see, sir." His protest fell on deaf ears, so intent was I on my find; for, drawing it from its sheath, I saw that the blade was exquisitely damaskeened. At the top of the hilt was one great diamond which seemed loose in its setting; and turning it I heard a slight click as if it controlled a spring. And then it flashed across me that if Renshaw's incredible story were true this must be the dagger of Fernando Vasquez, arranged by that great charlatan to suit his purpose.

It was but a poor trick, but one which would deceive a man half-crazed by torture and grief; for when the spring was set the slightest pressure on the blade drove it up into the handle, so that the hardest blow could not make it penetrate, and when the pressure was released it sprang out in place again.

Renshaw was so impatient that I gave over examining it and took out the papers, old parchments yellow with age and with the ink half faded; but in my hand I held a warrant granting a great tract of land to Sir Harry Renshaw, and at the foot a sprawling signature written by one whose hand was more used to sword than pen; for it was that of Henry Morgan, Governor of Jamaica for His Gracious Majesty Charles the Second.

I had only time to tell Renshaw that I should do my best for the boy before the fever returned to him, making him delirious and unconscious of what I said; but as I listened to his ravings through the day there was nothing of what he had told me in the moonlight. In the afternoon the doctor came, and after a brief examination told me it was only a matter of hours, for men die suddenly in the tropics.

"This is an unhealthy spot, anyway; it's strange he's lived so long," he said, looking about him. "In the old days there must have been a big plantation here, for that was quite a house; but I fancy the fevers drove them all away." At my request he examined the scars

on Renshaw's arms and legs, and pronounced them birthmarks; and then left to return to a humdrum practise, never guessing that beneath those scars lay such romance and mystery.

So with only Geoffrey for company I waited for the end, which came so peacefully that I thought he slept. I think that I had dozed a bit when I was awakened by a cry of alarm from the boy. His father apparently slept quietly; but the boy was standing by the window, gazing with horrified eyes at his bare arms; and as I watched them I saw the red and livid weals en-

circle them like a serpent and knew that Renshaw was dead. And on his child fell the hereditary curse of the Grand Inquisitor, Fernando Vasquez.

Fanatic, charlatan, courtier, priest—what was he? A little of each, perhaps, but this I know: that as Geoffrey Renshaw sailed back with me to Kingston the moon rose as we passed Gallows Point; and that half-witted boy, rising from his seat, cursed that grisly place with the voice and speech of Sir Harry Renshaw, one-time secretary to the Admiral of the Indies and Governor of Jamaica, Sir Henry Morgan.



THE CHINAMAN'S PAY

PURE silver, broken into small, irregular pieces, forms the pay of the Chinese soldier. Payment is an extraordinary process.

The whole of the night preceding is occupied in weighing out for each man his required quantity of silver, which is a very tedious business, and only successfully accomplished by infinite care, for here a piece the size of a pin's head has to be chipped off, and there a piece of similar minute proportions added.

Each man's silver bits are carefully wrapped in paper, with his name endorsed upon it, and the various parcels are distributed on parade. A private gets three and a half taels—equal to about four dollars, fifty-five cents—a month, and, having received his silver parcel, loses no time in exchanging the pieces at the nearest tradesman's shop, where, for each tael—one dollar, thirty cents—he receives one thousand small coins, called cash.



OBEYED INSTRUCTIONS

A SHOEMAKER in the city of Dublin, getting on well in the way of business, became proud. One day there were a lot of customers in the shop, when the shop-boy came in to say that the mistress bid him say dinner was ready.

"What's for dinner?" asked the shoemaker.

"Herrings, sir," answered the boy.

"All right," said the shoemaker, but when he went up to dinner he reprimanded the boy for not mentioning something decent and big, telling the boy, in future, always to mention something high-sounding when there were any people in the shop.

A few days after the boy came to say that dinner was ready.

"What's for dinner?" asked the shoemaker.

"Fish, sir," answered the boy.

"What sort of fish?" asked the shoemaker.

"A whale, sir," answered the boy.

A Close Shave

By Herbert Kaufman

When a man with a prosperous business finds a rival getting it all away from him, and doesn't know how to stop the despoiler, things are surely in a bad way for the first man. How this razor-manufacturer had "a close shave" forms a tale of absorbing interest.



WALTERS, President of the National Razor Company, paced the floor and chewed his cigar until three-quarters of its length was a macerated pulp. From time to time he peered at the paper in his hand. He was worried.

It was the first of the month and the statement before him was enough to bring despair to a heart that had not been kicked about by the heavy boot of ill fortune as long as his had. In fact, Walters was in a bad way. That is, the National Razor Company was in dire straits. And, after all, the National Razor Company was Walters. Of course, there were the minority stockholders, but they shared the profits not the troubles. And it needed a mine-promoter or a Merwin to figure a dividend out of the figures that stared at him from the debit side of the two columns before him. Times had changed in the past two years. Walters harked back to the earlier career of the company, when profit was the chief product of the factory and razors a mere incident in its activity. The country was howling for National Razors then. It wanted them at their own price, and their own price was a pretty stiff one—three hundred per cent. profit on sets and twice as much on separate blades.

Then the field had been cut up. Some of the infringers they fought off and

some they bought off, and some were not infringers. None of them mattered very much until Brown came along. You have heard of Brown. Who has not? Brown is perhaps the most distinguished sachem of the face-loving tribe of advertisers. Long ago he caused the smile to fade from the visage of the "gent" who shoes the nation, and he has deepened the look of melancholy upon the countenance of the individual who talcums it. But the concern caused in the hearts of these two valiant satraps of self-adulation was only one of envy and chagrin.

To Walters it was something more poignant. It was rapidly spelling ruin for him, just as it had foundered every other razor concern in the field. Need I remind you of Brown's advertisement? Why, even in old crowded China the hairless coolie knows Brown and what Brown stands for, and rubs his hand regretfully over his beardless, yellow face, bewailing the Providence that denies him the delight of the shaving smile that illuminates the Brown physiognomy. Brown's razor is a good one, but Brown's advertisement is better than the razor. It was genius, the designing of that advertisement. But it was Brown's smile that made the genius possible. Who can resist buying a Brown razor when one is faced day after day and month after month with his jovial grin, as he cuts a lane through the snowy drifts of lather and tells you in big type: IT'S

GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME—IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU.

If ever confidence glowed in a man's eye and if ever a man's eye could inspire confidence in another man, Brown's can. That face and that motto have made him a millionaire, have built his scores of factories, have crowded his little black boxes into the haberdashers' and the druggists'. It has sounded the doom of the barber. It is responsible for the steadily augmenting bread-line of men who once flourished upon conversation and tips. Its influence has crossed the Atlantic and turned the old-fashioned razor-shops of Sheffield into shear-factories and pen-knife plants. And all within a period of less than three years, due to the combining circumstances of a good idea, a good photographer and a good advertising-agent.

Look at the magazine on your table—Brown's face stares at you from the back. When you take the car to-night, glance at the row of newspapers spread in line before you. Brown smiles at you. You cannot dodge his razor. It is good enough for *him*, and you have not the will-power to resist finding out if it isn't good enough for *you*. Mark Twain's "pink trip slip" may have annoyed you, but Brown's dictum haunts you. If you want peace, you must have Brown's razor.

Yes, Brown was smiling the National Razor Company out of business. For month after month their sales had decreased. They had poured their profits into the newspapers and magazines; but, however heavily they rained their money into the press, Brown responded with downpours that made their most ambitious efforts mere sprinkles by contrast.

And now actual ruin was leering in through the door. Walters was at the end of his resources, mental and financial. Suddenly his teeth snapped into his cigar and the dismembered fragment fell upon the floor. "Poynter!" he exclaimed, "I wonder if the fellow can help us—Um-hm," he mused. "It is worth while trying. He certainly did wonderful work for the Utopia

Company. Manders himself acknowledges that they were in the last ditch when he pulled them through." He rang for his secretary.

II.

Franklyn Poynter has a habit of disappointing one at a first glance. To begin with, he distinctly lisps; and a lisp, as a rule, is a mark of effeminacy. But then, rules are captious. Their exceptions are not marked and labeled. For my part, I no longer follow them in judging men. At least, not lisping men, having suffered rather a pronounced surprise in my sophomore year at the hands of a red-headed, undersized, freshman who lisped a little and scrapped much. From time to time, men have been deluded by Poynter's lisp. But then, Poynter has led so many men astray, in so many directions, that the observation is redundant. Poynter's appearance, far more than his mode of speech, disarms the casual observer. He is slight and undersized, and a decided fop, affecting especially extreme scarfs and waistcoats. His complexion has the healthy glow of a boy's, and the absence of facial lines accentuates his youthful aspect. His eyes tell you nothing. They are lackadaisical and help you to misconstrue the character of the man. I have heard many say that Poynter can attribute much of his astounding success in life to his neutral appearance. And, indeed, I can well comprehend how an aspect of insignificance can well aid him in his peculiar line of activity.

Spectacular in his methods, he is none the less the most retiring of men. He has no intimates. His habits are those of a clean-minded woman. For all that his income must now be enormous, there is no ostentation in his mode of life. And despite his physical frailty, he has accomplished tasks that would sap the vitality of a Titan. Where or how he has acquired, in the short range of his life-span, such a vast knowledge of men and affairs, of human nature, of financial wile and trickery, is a most puzzling thing to me. He has sounded the waters of commerce until he knows

every shallow and every channel with the assurance of a master pilot.

The follies and foibles of men, their petty vanities, their weaknesses and fatuities constitute the primer of his text-books. He has never displayed despair in the face of the insuperable, nor exultation in the hour of routing victory. Rank, neither social nor plutocratic, impresses him. His blow leaves no brutal mark. I may with some happiness picture him as a pestiferous insect, inflicting his subtle annoyance until he frets away the ponderous vitality of the strongest and most virile enemy. He is a gad-fly cloaked with the spell of immunity and possessing a hell-given sapiency. Withal, he is the most amusing of men, blessed with a sense of humor and an appreciation of the ridiculous, which renders him, in non-professional hours, a most amusing companion, and in his professional activity, more dangerous than any other attribute which he possesses.

Poynter is a supreme egotist, but it is the egotism of self-confidence, the assurance of an Alexander or a Napoleon. Nor must one smile at the comparison; for however ridiculous Poynter may appear physically, his achievements are comparatively as great in the field of his endeavor as any other one man's have been in his life-bent. Often impudent, even to the point of discourtesy—brusk, sarcastic as a whip-lash, careless alike of condemnation and of praise, he is beyond all else as honest as conscience—impeccable. The arrow of bribery has never found him a target. Once he has accepted his retainer, a Judas-piece that would force Atlas' back to bend under the weight of the temptation will find his shoulders as erect as a grenadier's of the guard.

As Walters entered the door, Poynter nodded to him to take the chair drawn directly in front of his flat-top desk, upon which there were simply a telephone and a small pad. He reached into his pocket and drew forth a cigar-case of carved Japanese leather, from which protruded half a dozen of the long, slender Havanas which are his constant addiction.

"Have one?" he suggested. "It will make us both think better. What Walters are you?"

"National Razor Company," responded the president.

"Ah, I see. How's business?"

"Well—er——" began the other with a wry smile.

"I see; rotten. What's the matter? Too much Brown?"

"Uh—hm," growled Walters.

"What do you want me to do?"

"I don't know," was the reply.

"Don't you think you had better tell me just what's biting you; then maybe I'll know."

Walters began hesitatingly to outline his story, skirting around the real facts with the same reluctance that some men feel when consulting a physician—fearful of finding their ailments worse than they anticipate.

"Oh, come on. Get down to hard facts," lisped Poynter. "Tell me what is the matter. We have only half an hour, and at this rate it will take you a week to make up your mind to show your grouch."

Walters flushed. He was not used to such peremptory handling. Now that he had come, he began to feel that perhaps after all he had made a mistake in expecting this lisping dude to accomplish anything which his experienced brain had not already planned and rejected.

"Wait a minute," broke in Poynter. "My retainer is one thousand dollars." Walters started.

"Pretty steep, isn't it?" he suggested.

"I said my *retainer*," lisped Poynter with emphasis. "I'll let you know my *fee* after you tell me what you require."

"Hold on, Mr. Poynter," interrupted Walters. "We are going a little fast. I haven't quite decided that I shall need you."

"All right, then," was the careless rejoinder. "Go home and think it over. Come back when you have less time to waste. I haven't any of my own that I want to use that way to-day."

He rang the bell.

"Miss Wenson," he said to his secre-

tary, "I am through with Mr. Walters. Get the papers on the Queen Chemical Case and we'll go through them."

Then he arose with a gesture of dismissal. Poynter's unconcern, however, now edged Walter's desire to retain him.

"I accept your terms," he said. "I will mail you our check to-night."

The secretary stood awaiting orders. Poynter motioned to her to retire and drew his pad before him. Walters shoved over the company's last statement.

"What do you think of it?" he queried.

"Rotten. What did it—Brown?"

Walters nodded assent. "Yes, he has got us up against a wall. I can't go any farther and the wall won't move. Can you lift us over?"

"Maybe I can, maybe I can't," was the laconic retort. "Tell me some more."

Walters made a clean breast of his affairs, beginning at the start of his company, recounting Brown's inroads, and wound up with a gesture of hopelessness.

"Can you do anything?" he questioned.

Poynter went over to a bookcase and took out a copy of one of the current magazines. He studied Brown's advertisement on the back page for a few moments, and then smiled.

"I'll send for you next month," he said, "to sign papers of consolidation with Brown. Good-by. And," he added, as the bewildered Walters started for the door, "it will cost you four thousand more."

III.

"Who's this? Oh, Mr. Poynter? No, Mr. Walters isn't here. I expect him back at three this afternoon. What's that, he is to come over to your office at four? All right, I will give him the message."

But Walters did not wait until his appointment. No sooner did he see the memorandum on his desk than he was on his way to the Atlantic Building as

fast as his legs could carry him. The girl recognized him.

"Your appointment is for four," she said.

"By Jove, this is important," he replied. "I want to see Poynter right away. You go in and tell him that I am out here."

"Your appointment is for four," was the quiet reply. And so, despite his impatience, he was forced to chafe until the longest hour he had ever known ticked out its nervous length.

Poynter, radiant in an orange waistcoat and a purple scarf, nodded to him as he entered.

"Here they are," he said, displaying a pair of papers. "Sign there!"

Walters gazed at him with incredulous eyes.

"What's this?" he asked.

"Consolidation with the Brown people," was the nonchalant reply. "Have a cigar. Make you think better."

But Walters did not hear him. His eager eyes were perusing the documents. He wanted to pinch himself, hardly daring to realize the truth of the splendid terms set forth in the instrument.

"By heck!" he breathed, when he had finished. "How in the name of the Almighty did you do it? Look here, Poynter, shake hands! You are a little wonder. Honestly, I didn't think you'd succeed! You've pulled me through just in time—it was a mighty close shave!"

He picked up the papers again, "But you have, haven't you?" And he laughed with the halting restraint of a man to whom cheeriness has been an absent acquaintance for some time.

Poynter reached into his drawer and took a card from an index. "The matter is closed," he said, "and you can send your check. Four thousand, you know, was what we agreed upon."

"Why, it's worth forty thousand," exulted the other.

"I said four," lisped Poynter.

"Do you mind telling me how you turned this thirty-foot handspring?" said the president of the National Razor Company.

Poynter opened the drawer again and threw a piece of cardboard on his desk. It fell upon its face, and when Walters turned it over and caught sight of the other side he broke into a roar of laughter that did not check itself until tears fairly shone in his eyes.

"Say," he gloated, "I'll bet old Brown was just ossified when he saw that. Got him *right*, didn't you? I'm going to take this home and frame it. Let's have the story, like a good fellow."

"Well," began Poynter, "Brown himself did it. His vanity is his greatest strength and at the same time his strongest weakness. His face has been his making and his undoing. For months it has been wearing upon my nerves, so that when you came and placed your case with me, the vision of his lather-smearing physiognomy at once loomed up. In a flash I saw my course. You yourself had exhausted every artifice within your power. You had assaulted his business and found it a Gibraltar. Each of your Rolands of cunning had been met with a more masterful Oliver on his part. To be very frank, my dear Mr. Walters, Brown outclassed you in management, exploitation, attack and defense. There remained but one arrow which could possibly find his heel, the shaft of ridicule."

Poynter paused for a moment and gazed abstractedly into the ceiling.

"Ridicule, however, is the most potent of all engines of destruction. Its flight is as swift as the rays of light. It is the only missile that can make of a weakling a David able to bring doom to his Goliath, however mighty or powerful he may seem. Ridicule has shut the doors of the White House to a dozen men. It has humbled prelate and author, merchant and jurist—its dart is tipped with the deadliest of poisons. Ridicule is commercial, political and social death. Whenever an individual has allowed his personality to dominate an enterprise, it is only a question of patience, a matter of time before ridicule can be made to wreck him. Brown built up his success through the influence of his advertising.

The foundation of his advertising is his face. He has dinged it and donged it and banged it and slammed it into the notice of every man in America so persistently that whenever the idea of purchasing a razor occurs to him, he at once remembers Brown's enticing smile of confidence, and the germ of suggestion fructifies into the impulse of investigation and ultimate purchase. Brown's advertising is founded upon a recognized psychological truth.

"It is human nature to believe most in those things with which one is most familiar. Men have still greater confidence in those things in which the exploiter evinces his own faith. Brown's razor, fortified by Brown's belief in it, has produced Brown's great success. The task set before me was to prove that Brown has no confidence in his razor—in short, *that he did not use it*. The problem presented no complications. Brown is human, Brown is busy, Brown is rich. Rich men, especially those who have attained affluence within a short space of years, are usually socially ambitious. This rule is invariable with the wives of the *nouveaux riches*. Inquiry develops the fact that Brown *has* a wife, and that she has been stung with the social hornet.

Sooner or later Mrs. B. with her bee was certain to lure the busy Mr. B. from his affairs to share in some social Roman holiday. Therefore watch Brown. From the time we joined forces, Brown lived under a shadow. My man has known each activity of his every hour. On Saturday Mrs. Brown, exultant in the capture of a social lioness, telephones him to tea at Sherry's. Brown, equally exultant, drops his correspondence and tears up-town. Needs a shave. No conveniences in his office. Drops into a barber-shop. So does his shadow. A dollar tip to the hat-boy, a convenient pillar for the shadow, a splendid flood of sunlight through a pavement casing, a carefully posed camera, a click of the shutter, and before Brown can realize what has happened he is ours. You can imagine the rest. First a visit to an artist, then one to Brown. I hold a very annoy-

ing picture. The prospect of that thing in a dozen publications does not appeal to Brown's peculiar sense of humor. Ridicule can tear down in a month what labor cannot build up in a year. We meet; we dicker; we haggle. Brown swears; Brown talks injunction; Brown talks terms. I talk terms; we both talk terms. Sum total—your company merged with his company; now sign."

Walters with trembling fingers affixed his signature to the two papers, placed one in his pocket and at Poynter's request passed the duplicate over to him. Then, chortling with satisfaction, he hastened to the door, meanwhile scrutinizing the card in his hand and roaring with laughter. It was a picture of Brown in the barber's-chair

—his profile as clean-cut as a duo-tone cameo, the barber scraping away at it for dear life, and a background of other barbers corroborating the authenticity of the scene. Surrounding the photograph was a border-design exactly duplicating the famous decoration peculiar to Brown's own advertising, but instead of the customary wording thereupon, these lines had been lettered in: IT ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR HIM. IT ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU.

Walters paused for a moment as he opened the door, and then looked back into the room.

"Poynter," he grinned, "I'd give another thousand for a snap shot of Brown when you showed him this one."



AT THE BAR OF CONSCIENCE

IT was a small school in New Jersey, and the village schoolma'am was doing her best to elicit the meaning of the word "conscience" from her attentive, but somewhat dull-headed pupils.

"Now, boys," said the patient teacher, "suppose one of you stole a piece of sugar from the basin and popped it in your mouth, and mother came in, what would happen?"

"Get a lickin', sure!" shouted one of the boys emphatically.

"Yes, I suppose so. But your face would become red, wouldn't it?"

And the boy thought a minute before he said: "Yes, ma'am."

"And what is it that makes your face turn red?" queried the teacher, thinking she had gained her point. But the small boy answered with a solemn look:

"Tryin' to swallow the sugar quick."



INSTRUCTIONS TO REPORTERS

PASTED over the desk of the chief reporter of a certain paper are the following instructions, which the reporters are expected to follow in the preparation of "copy":

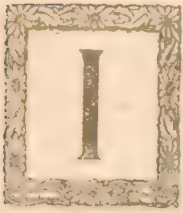
"All brides are 'lovely, beautiful, and accomplished,' except they be old widows, and then they are 'amiable and cultivated.' All merchants who advertise are 'enterprising, wide-awake, and a credit to our city.' The names of those who do not advertise must not on any consideration appear in our paper.

"All old lawyers are 'worthy of a place on the bench.' Young lawyers are 'promising and silver-tongued.' Doctors are 'eminent'; farmers are 'highly intelligent.' Candidates who put their announcements in our paper are 'gaining ground every day.' Those who do not announce are 'likely to be defeated.' Under no circumstances must these rules be broken."

Money-getter Number .45

By Dane Coolidge

This is an exciting tale of mining in the West, in which an original and amusing desperado has the leading rôle. Money-getter wanted all the money he could get - but in one particular instance he got more than he could get away with.



It was in the chill gray of early morning, while the sun still hid behind the buttressed cliffs of Apache Leap and the naked giant cactus of the mesa stood out coldly against the sky, that an unobtrusive little man leading a pack-animal rode up the Pinal road and halted behind the pile of rocks called Robbers' Roost. Except for the time and place there was nothing in this to excite suspicion, but as the stage was due at sunup any true friend of Bud McWillie's would wish to see him elsewhere, especially as he had money-getter number .45 slung low against his leg. In the hush of dawn the thunder of the Silver King mills came pulsing over the ridges from Pinal—*chug-a-chug-a-chug*—and from behind his barrier McWillie grinned slyly. Being naturally a joker he could see the humor of that tireless industry.

Though he looked dangerous, with a red bandanna tied across his nose and his sombrero pulled low over his eyes, Bud McWillie had not officiated at the christening of Robbers' Roost. There had been blood shed upon that occasion—which is bad, and shows that the work was raw. The James boys in Kansas did different. Besides, those particular hold-ups were now making penitentiary bridles down at Yuma. This was McWillie's first try for the treasure. Prior to that morning his ac-

tivities had been limited to shooting up Mexican sheep-camps and branding *orehannas*—nothing very overt in a cattle country. But if it was a likely calf and off the trail he had been known to beef the mother and *make* it an *orehanna*, which shows a distinct criminal bent.

Punching cows and busting horses for his old man, he had been raised within sight of square-topped Picket Post, the landmark of the Pinal country; and while he rode the trails too much to suit the Cattlemen's Association, by the residents he was simply noted as a little wild. But now all it needed was Bill Connors and the stage to give him his start as a "bad man."

As the sun rose slowly above the summit of Apache Leap—where in the old days four hundred stampeded Indians had leaped to their death before the rush of the soldiers—the rumble of wheels sounded from up the cañon; then, jouncing and careening, the stage came hammering along through the chuck-holes that marked the turn, and McWillie drew money-getter from its holster. Still grinning nervously beneath his mask he lay close until the leaders swung past him; then, as the driver came by, juggling with his lines, McWillie rose up suddenly and covered him with his revolver.

"Hands up!" he shouted. "*Whoa!*" And as the stage-driver threw on his brake the leaders drew back and surged away from the pistol, shaking their

heads. The christening of Robbers' Roost had made them gun-shy, although in that respect they were no worse than Connors, who threw up his hands, lines, whip and all.

"Don't shoot!" he yelled, and the stage fetched up with a jerk.

"Well, you saved your bacon that time!" remarked the hold-up. "Now throw off your treasure, and be quick about it."

"All right," answered the driver, and with some half-mumbled observations about not being hired to get shot at he heaved the heavy box over the wheel with a bang and craftily chucked the mail-bag after it.

"None o' that!" cried McWillie, sharply. "Now you just pile out and put the mail-bag on again. You must think I'm hunting trouble with Uncle Sam."

Still grumbling, Connors twisted his lines around the brake and dropped to the ground, thanking God, however, that there was no messenger along to start a row. Then with the bag again between his feet he gathered up the lines sulkily.

"Well?" he said, and McWillie lowered his gun.

"You go on down the road," he directed, "and if I see you cutting out a horse or turning back I'll tend to your case later."

Connors kicked off the brake with an ugly bang. "Gee up!" he yapped; and as the stage whipped around the first curve McWillie leaped down and hefted the heavy box.

"Easy money," he cried triumphantly, dragging the treasure-box behind the rocks. "Nothing to do but break the lock." Half an hour later with the solid ingots of silver nicely balanced in his bull-hide pack-boxes Bud McWillie stood ready to start on his way, no longer a humble rustler but a genuine Arizona hold-up—the kind you read about in the *Examiner*. But somehow there seemed to be something lacking, something funny, to give life and color to the jest. Drawing a revolver-cartridge from his belt he picked up the broken cover of the box and made a

few marks across it with the bullet—then, just as it came into his head, he scrawled this poem upon the board:

Don't crowd me, boys,
I won't be took alive.
If ennybody asts my name,
It's Money-gitter Number .45.

He shot a powder-burnt hole underneath for a signature, his horses jumped, and the long flight began.

Not that there was anything break-neck about this retreat, for the superintendent of the Silver King did not stand in with the sheriff and the pursuit would be perfunctory, to say the least; but, not to take unnecessary chances, Money-getter kept moving as long as there was daylight, being careful to ride over all the smooth ledges he came across and fight shy of three or four cow-camps that lay in behind the Superstition Mountains.

In all the black tangle of buttes and cañons that lay between Apache Leap and the jig-saw summit of the Superstitions there was hardly a trail that Bud McWillie had not traveled; for the cattle-stealing business takes a man into the byways, and at nightfall no one short of an Indian trailer could have followed him. As for the newly sworn posse of deputies that took up the chase, it did not take them the whole day to come round to Bill Connors' matter-of-fact philosophy—whoever this hold-up was, they were not being paid to get shot at; and, having zealously run their horses to a standstill, they came stringing back one by one into Pinal and let Mr. Money-getter go.

Now all this time Bud McWillie, old man McWillie's boy, was supposed to be up Queen Creek somewhere, prospecting; and since it might invite unfriendly comment to be seen fifty miles away from camp, riding up the cañon a few hours ahead of a posse, Money-getter kept off the main trails absolutely and took to the rough country like a goat. There was not a puncher riding for Jack Frazer or the Lazy Vs who did not know Bud McWillie well enough to watch him; and while his reputation as a rustler was fair, McWillie desired to keep it entirely dis-

tinct from the fame of Money-getter the hold-up. It was a weary way, and rough on his stock; but at the end of three days he broke into the head of Queen Creek without meeting a man, and pulled up at his old camp.

Ripped out through a chaos of terraced crags by the rush of sudden cloudbursts, Queen Creek splits the jagged Pinal Mountains in twain, splintering out at the end into countless washes and blind cañons, the home of outlaw cattle. As for these wild-eyed renegades many of them bore the sprawling block-and-tackle brand of Bud McWillie, artfully superimposed upon an older mark; and the rest, being unbranded, belonged to any man who could rope or shoot them—which was Bud again. Except for stray prospectors, who may turn up anywhere that a snake can crawl or a buzzard can fly, McWillie had the upper waters of Queen Creek to himself. After hobbling his horses he carried his treasure into the cave that served him as a home.

There, over an ironwood fire, he quickly melted down the telltale ingots in an iron mortar, pouring the liquid silver into pot-holes in the wet sand. When the last one was converted into a formless lump he threw down his hat and laughed hilariously. Whoever could identify those slugs of metal as the stolen treasure of the Silver King! Now with cattle it was different—the brand was not so easy to change, and an *orehanna* calf would bawl for its mother for weeks; but here was a higher medium of exchange, easy to get, easy to carry, compact as money itself—and a simple charcoal fire would change it from a trim ingot, stamped "Silver King," to a chunk of metal that any high-grade assayer would buy.

A few days after making this remarkable discovery Bud McWillie rode into Globe and surprised several no-questions-asked assayers by the frequency with which he brought in lumps of silver. At the end of a week, during which McWillie had led the town in a fanatical assault upon a certain faro-bank, a conservative member of

the assaying profession ventured to speak a word on the subject, although it was none of his business.

"You high-graders over at Silver King seem to find pretty good pickings these days," he observed, juggling his scales to make them come short weight.

"Huh?" grunted McWillie drowsily. Then, seeing that the assayer was regarding him fixedly, he flared up into a proper resentment. "Well, what is it to you, you highbinder?" he demanded. "Don't you make a rake-off on it too?"

"Sure," admitted the assayer, "but you better go slow or the company will catch on and throw a few of you into the *juzgado*."

"*Juzgado*?" exclaimed McWillie indignantly. "Not much—no prison-bars for me—not while Tom Langley is sheriff! No sir, I helped elect him!" Then, forgetting for a moment his culpability, he took it upon himself to correct the assayer, and also to rebuke him. "My friend," he said, laying a serious hand upon his shoulder, "you insult me! I ain't no vest-pocket high-grader—I'm a *man*! Now listen—I'll tell you—honest now—I've got a good thing!" He tapped his chest impressively, and pocketed his money without counting the change.

"All right, pardner," answered the assayer, smiling indulgently; "only don't work it too hard."

II.

If there ever was a mine calculated by nature to make everybody happy from the stockholders to the miners, it was the Silver King. When a mine turns out native silver in hunks there ought to be enough to go round within reason, and the superintendent who is overlord on such a bonanza is not likely to telephone forty miles for the sheriff every time he finds a miner who is "making a collection" of silver ores. It is only when some one plays the hog, like Bud McWillie, that the official resentment is likely to take a practical turn—and when Bill Connors sent word by a Mexican boy that he had been robbed again, Dudfield, the big superin-

tendent of the Silver King, became wroth.

Four times within a year the stage had been held up at Robbers' Roost, and in his first pique Dudfield remarked that he would have to tuck a little powder under that point of rocks pretty soon and blow it into the creek. Then with a weary smile he told the local deputy to "go after him," and shut himself up in his office to meditate. These mountain deputies, appointed by a sheriff who was elected by the miners, were about as keen after hold-ups as they were after high-graders—nevertheless, the treasure had to go out and some one had to protect it. After the first hold-up Dudfield thought he had done his duty by the stockholders when he hired Barney Schell for a shotgun messenger. Barney was a proper bad man, and he understood that he was hired to shoot. And so did the hold-ups—that was the pity of it. They potted him from ambush before he could fire a shot, dropped a leader to stop the stage, and looted the treasure-box regardless.

It was then that Bill Connors and his horses became gun-shy; and the messenger job went begging. As for the sheriff, the coroner beat him to the corpse by twenty-four hours, and the pursuit was over before the inquest. The fact that the robbers got drunk down in Tucson and gave themselves away did not alter the case at home—the sheriff, Tom Langley, was against him, Dudfield. As an individual, Dudfield cast one vote for sheriff, whereas the men who were robbing him of high-grade ore alone cast several hundred. Furthermore, the Silver King paid no taxes on its treasure but shipped it out of the country, much to the detriment and prejudice of Arizona in general and of Pinal County in particular—hence whatever was done in its defense would have to be done by the company.

That the superintendent of a big mine should allow his treasure to be robbed four times within a year might argue with some people a certain incapacity. The ordinary mining super-

intendent is supposed to be, and often is, a promoted bookkeeper from the East who smokes two-bit cigars in the front office, never goes underground, and knocks down ten per cent. coming and going. But H. H. Dudfield was no such man. He was a Western product, and drew a larger salary than the governor of the Territory for his ability to hold things together and keep the peace. But when a man has a miners' union and a board of directors on his hands, a thousand men on his pay-roll, freight-wagons running ninety miles across the desert, and three shifts working in the mine and mill, it takes about four hold-ups to rivet his attention upon the matter.

Being now thoroughly aroused Dudfield went out and took a look at the box; and it was while he was studying Money-getter's handiwork with the cold-chisel that he came upon his efforts with the pen—or rather, with the blunt end of a .45 bullet.

"Well, well," he remarked, "this fellow had time to throw off a little poetry before he skipped out, eh?"

"Don't crowd me, boys,
I won't be took alive.

Um! That's pretty good. We'll have to send that in to the *Arizona Examiner*." He drew out his note-book and copied it carefully, while the crowd gaped; and soon the word went round that the new hold-up was a poet, and the boss was going to put his poem in the paper.

Meanwhile Dudfield dropped in at the blacksmith-shop and ordered a new box.

"Don't be stingy about it, Jake," he said. "Make it big—say three feet long by two feet square, inside.—And say," he added, "put some iron on it. Your last box was chopped open with a cold-chisel by one of our local poets." And as the laugh passed over this new idea of the boss—as if it would do any good to make the box big—he smiled wisely. There were several people in Pinal who, under the influence of liquor, claimed that they could read old Dudfield like a book, but most men agreed

that he was too many for them. The poem appeared in the *Examiner*, and everybody read it, with a whole column about the poet-highwayman of Pinal; but it took Bud McWillie himself to solve the mystery of that strong-box.

III.

It was in the Lone Star saloon—where he was making a nuisance of himself on the strength of the money he had spent—that Bud McWillie, groggily thumbing over an old paper, first saw his poem in print, and he let out such a yell that several men forgot themselves and looked at him. Glorifying in his sudden fame, Bud took instant advantage of this indiscretion—but they faded away before him. Then with drunken insistence he endeavored to get the barkeeper to read his poem, but not even that accommodating individual would listen to him; so at last he crowded the *Examiner* into his pocket and went surging out into the street to seek appreciation.

But in a busy town like Globe—where a dollar could lie in the sawdust for half a day before anybody had time to pick it up—it is surprising how little attention a drunken man can command after his money is gone. Before he could force his claims to authorship upon anybody, Bud sobered up to the point where he suddenly realized that he was trying to give himself away. It is an honor to be a poet in any land, but no one likes to get thrown into jail for his first attempt. So with his tongue between his teeth Money-getter, the poet, saddled up his horses at the feed corral and drifted quietly out of town.

One week later Bud McWillie, the cow-man, brought a bunch of wild cattle down the cañon and sold them to the butcher at Pinal. Things were lively in that little town, spread out along the banks of Queen Creek. The jagged face of nature was obscured in spots by bottles, champagne flowed until it spilled, and the night rang with music and laughter; but contrary to his custom Bud drank only in moderation, lin-

gering about the saloons to see what men had to say of Money-getter.

Here and there his heart was made glad by hearing the name mentioned jocularly; but it was in the Big Casino where men jostled each other at the bar that Bud McWillie first realized what a hold his poem had taken upon the popular fancy. In the midst of a general treat some little man who was getting squeezed in the press suddenly piped out:

"Don't crowd me, boys,
I won't be took alive."

And the roar of laughter that followed shook the glasses. Overwhelmed by the spontaneity of that guffaw, Bud smiled dizzily and turned away; but even after he had returned to camp a self-conscious grin still lurked around the corners of his mouth, and he began to write new poems on the cover of his grub-box in anticipation of his next attempt.

The burden of several of these verses flitted automatically through his subconscious mind when, after mature preparation, he again dropped in behind his especial boulder on Robbers' Roost and waited impatiently for the stage. He was deep in his musings when the rumble of wheels broke in upon him, and when he yelled: "Hands up!" at Bill Connors his voice was a little lacking in the harsh malevolence of his craft. Nevertheless Connors pulled up in a hurry.

"Throw off your box!" commanded McWillie, squinting shrewdly along his sights, but Connors only raised his hands higher.

"It's pretty heavy," he said apologetically, "I——"

"Now here," broke in McWillie, "don't give me any back talk. Just throw off that treasure and be quick about it."

"All right," replied the stage-driver, wrapping his lines around the brake. "I'll do my best—but it's powerful heavy."

He dropped stiffly down and was starting toward the rear, when McWillie halted him abruptly. "What kind

of game is this?" he demanded. "Where you goin' to?"

"Back to the boot," answered Connors peevishly. "Didn't you say to throw off the box? Well, then!" And still grumbling he went around behind. Throwing loose the lashings he cast the flap back and laid hold upon the new box, boosting it as if to try his strength. Then, bracing his foot against the deck of the boot, he surged back and the huge chest moved about an inch.

"Hell's fire!" exclaimed McWillie. "Is that all treasure?"

"That's what!" responded Connors. "They only send it down every other day now."

"Well, yank it off then," cried Bud, overjoyed at his luck, "and let me get at it! Holy Moses, what a haul!" In his excitement he entirely forgot the etiquette of his profession, which runs to sharp commands and surly answers, and when the big box tipped off and fell with a bang he squealed like a schoolgirl. Then, recovering himself, he bent his gun upon the panting stage-driver and said gruffly:

"Now you chase yourself, you old skate—and don't try any funny business down the road or I'll blow the top of your head off!" Being thus duly warned and insulted Bill Connors drove grouchy away and McWillie leaped upon his treasure. With all his strength he could barely raise one end of it, and his eyes glittered as he tested the lock. The box weighed two hundred pounds if it weighed an ounce—and the bulk of it was solid silver. Bud doubted if the little pack-mule that he had brought this time could carry it all. However, the box had to be broken first—but if old Dudfield thought a job of blacksmithing could stand between Money-getter and his stake he was away off.

Running to his pack McWillie jerked out his chisels and hammer and grabbed up a long-handled driller's sledge that he had stolen from a deserted shaft on the way down from Queen Creek. Swinging this handy tool above his head he brought it down upon the lock,

and for ten minutes he struck as steadily as if he was practising for a drilling contest against the renowned Silver King hard-rocks, but even then the blacksmithing of old Jake held sturdily.

"I'll fix you yet," said Money-getter, talking through his teeth. He picked up his cold-chisel and hammer, and began to cut a circle around the lock; and as it fell away the full white gleam of the silver shone out through the ragged hole.

"Aha!" chuckled Money-getter, grinning to the ears, "here's where I make a winning." He seized the cover, wrenched it from its moorings, and grabbed for the treasure, but it held fast.

"What the hell!" he faltered, tearing aside the canvas, and a weak flow of profanity showed that he was hard hit. The box was full of silver—but it was all in one ingot.

This was the dirty Irish trick that old Dudfield had hatched up to euchre him out of his treasure! Hissing with anger Money-getter laid hold upon the broken chest and dumped the tremendous gleaming ingot upon the ground. And what an ingot—his eyes bulged out as he looked at it—nowhere upon it was there a crack or a blemish—it was two full days' milling, cast into a solid bar. Maybe it weighed two hundred pounds, maybe more—a royal treasure, fit to give to a king, but never to be packed on a mule.

Money-getter saw that from the start. Nevertheless, with the bullheaded pertinacity of a man who is beaten but will not own it, he brought up his pack-mule and tried to burden him with the treasure.

"Whoa, Jack," he said, standing on the slack of the rope; and then, with an herculean effort, he bucked the huge bar up and dropped it across the pack-boxes. The mule staggered, grunting and shifting his feet; then, seeing that his master really expected him to carry that weight upon the apex of his backbone, he threw a sudden snaky twist into his spine and tipped it over on the far side.

"Hyar—stan' up—whoa, pet," yelled

Money-getter, struggling to hold it in place. When the bar hit the ground he slapped the mule over the ears for his stubbornness. Then he leaned heavily over his back and studied on how he could get away with that ingot—because he was certainly going to do it.

There was only one way to pack the thing, and that was to cut it in two. With the halves nicely balanced in his pack-boxes the two hundred pounds would ride easily enough—but it would be a job to cut it! Leaping astride the ingot he drew a line across the middle and went to work at it with his chisels, glancing up the road occasionally as he tapped away with his hammer. It was a desolate road, dragging along over dry-washes and ridges for thirty miles without passing a single house—but Pinal was only two miles up the line and the freight-wagons would be along pretty soon. And—well, it would take a man a year to cut that ingot in two with a chisel. Money-getter threw down his tools and gazed at the treasure moodily. The joke was on him, that was all.

Picking up his chisel he began to trace idle, introspective lines upon the smooth surface of the ingot. He had intended to write a poem for this occasion that would set the boys to laughing—something funny—but he had got left all around. Still—well, the boys would be looking for something, anyhow—why not be a sport? His pale-blue eyes became fixed, he swallowed his Adam's apple contemplatively, and the old self-conscious smile crept back.

"Well, here goes!" he said, and with a bold flourish he scratched this poem across one end of the ingot.

Take back your bar,
It's too dam' big fur me.
My back is brok' from wurkin',
And I'll haf to leav' it be.

Turning his head to one side Money-getter read it over and laughed; but before he signed his name he stopped and considered. From reading that some folks might think he had weakened, and chase him up. Here was a chance for one of those hot-stuff poems

that he had written on the cover of the grub-box—they'd put that in the paper sure. He spat on a bullet from his belt and began again:

Stand back! I ain't afrade
Ov enny man alive.
You'll know me when you see me,
I'm Money-gitter Number .45.

"Thar," said Money-getter, rising to his feet, "I guess that'll hold you for a while." And with a gay swagger he rode away.

IV.

To those who use the foot-rule of form in measuring the works of a poet, the humble quatrains of Money-getter may seem lame indeed. But Pinal thought they were fine. The freighter who found the ingot in the road stopped to read the verses before he rode back with the news; the deputy sheriff and his posse took a smoke and laughed over them before they went after Money-getter; and Dudfield swore that that one about "Take back your bar" was the funniest thing he had seen in a year.

"The *Examiner* will run that, all right," he said, and while he was writing it down a hundred men clamored outside the office for a copy of the paper. Dudfield ordered five hundred copies, with fifty extras for himself, sent up by the first mail; and the whole town settled restlessly down to wait. There was only one man in camp who did not fall in with the spirit of the times—that was Lum Martin, the ranger. Having been called to those parts to investigate a little case of cattle-stealing, he was stopping at Pinal. When, the day after the hold-up, he heard of the outlaw poet he was scandalized.

Of the four and twenty rangers who serve the Territory of Arizona there are all kinds, short and tall—but Lum Martin was the "roughest" of them all. If he had been born a calf he would certainly have been killed for beef on the first *rodeo*. Seen from the rear, which was his pleasanter aspect, with his curved back and skinny neck and his

head bulging big behind the ears, he looked like a shriveled desert turtle, walking on its hind legs.

If he had ever laughed since they had tickled him in the cradle, that smile had never brightened sinful Pinal. His mind was full of sanguinary thoughts directed against the enemies of the Cattlemen's Association and the Federal Government; and his cholera went out against Money-getter also, although he as yet had only robbed a mining company. However, you can never tell what one of these hold-ups will do next, and on one pretext or another Martin lingered gloomily about the town, neither talking nor drinking. But when the *Arizona Examiner* came out with its florid account of the "Outlaw Bard of Silver King," he snorted.

"You all just wait till I get after Mr. Money-getter for something," he said, gnashing his teeth under pretext of chewing tobacco. "I'll poet him with a .30-.30!" But the natives were too busy reading the editorial appreciation of Money-getter's poem, which began: "Without claiming to be a final authority upon the tuneful outflow of the Pierian spring," and ended: "The untimely death of this frontier troubadour at the hands of the peace officers would certainly inflict an irreparable loss upon Arizona letters."

Meanwhile, high up in the mountains back of Silver King, Bud McWillie, the author of "Don't crowd me, boys," and "Take back your bar," was sitting in the silence of the desolate peaks, watching the Mammoth trail. For three days he had ridden over the roughest country he could find, without knowing whether he was leading a desperate chase or simply wearing out his horses' feet. The sense of something impending in the outer world weighed upon him heavily as he waited, and he wondered dimly whether the *Examiner* had published his poems. He would like to have fixed that last one over a little—just touch it up, you know—but it was not so bad, either. And this was the day when the papers would come up.

It might be that the Mexican kid that carried the Mammoth mail would have

an *Examiner* in his pocket, and he could get to look at it. So in mingled hope and fear Bud McWillie waited for the mail to come by; and, as the Mexican with his pot-bellied horse and flapping pouches came toiling up the trail, Bud's heart began to pound against his ribs. Then, without any fixed intentions, he fumbled for his handkerchief and tied it across his nose, just below the eyes, pulling his hat down low—and when the mail-carrier came opposite he rose up and covered him with money-getter number .45.

"Hands up!" he said, in a matter-of-fact way. But the Mexican boy, far from being reassured, yelped with fright, while his horse shied over to the ragged edge of the trail.

"Have you got an *Examiner* about you?" demanded McWillie. But the simple-minded *paisano* did not understand. Money-getter had scared all the English out of him.

"No *intiendo*," he murmured.

"*Tienes uste un Arizona Examiner?*" roared McWillie.

"No *intiendo*," Juan muttered blankly, and Money-getter's impatience overcame him.

"Oh, hell!" he grumbled, "you don't savvy nothin'!" He strode down the hill and felt of the Mexican's pockets, but there was no paper in them. "What ye got in *them*?" he demanded, feeling of the mail-pouches.

"U. S. mail!" answered the boy, with the dignity of a government official.

"Well, don't try to put on any dog over me," blustered McWillie, "and why they picked *you* out to carry the mail is sure a problem. Now, Mr. Greaser, I'll trouble you to open one of them bags and give me an *Arizona Examiner*. That ain't asking much, but I'll have to shoot you full of holes if you don't do it!"

The Mexican shrugged his shoulders. "No can," he said. "Have no key."

"No?" retorted Money-getter sarcastically. "Well, then, I guess I'll have to spoil your bag for you." He drew out his knife and slashed a hole in the nearest pouch. "That's what I was after!" he said, fishing out an *Ex-*

aminer. "Now chase yourself, *hombre*, and keep the change!" He sat down upon a rock and tore open the paper.

"DARING HOLD-UP!" he read; "THE OUTLAW POET OF PINAL ENGRAVES VERSES ON SILVER INGOT!" And from that moment Bud McWillie became oblivious of the lesser things in life. He was roused at last by the clatter of hoofs down the cañon, and looking up he saw the Mexican boy, half a mile away, galloping heavily back toward Pinal.

"Well, durn my hide!" he exclaimed, "if I didn't let that greaser git away from me! W'y, the little devil, I believe he's going after that ranger!" Pinal, indeed, was the Mexican's destination, and five minutes after his arrival Lum Martin rode down the main street furiously, his carbine tucked carefully away under his left knee.

"I'll poet him," he remarked sardonically, as he passed the crowd by the store, and a sudden gloom fell upon the whole company. Never before had Pinal produced such an *improvisatore*; and now, just as he was beginning to make the camp famous, Lum Martin was out to kill him. And for what—why, for taking a copy of his own poems.

"It's a dirty shame!" declared Jimmy Boyle, who kept the Casino. "Boys, ain't there something we can do about this?"

"Let us rope that dam' Mexican," suggested a gentleman in spurs, "and learn him to keep his mouth shut."

"Naw, I mean about this here Money-getter!" interposed Boyle. "Somebody ought to ride out and keep him from being killed!"

"I'll tell you what, fellers!" yelled McFarland, the deputy sheriff, who saw his chance to balk a rival officer, "let's go out and arrest this Money-getter for robbing the stage! Who'll go with me now? I'll swear in the whole town!"

Half an hour later thirty armed men rode up to the Casino for a last drink on the house; and as they scampered off up the Mammoth trail H. H. Duffield smiled upon them benevolently from the company store.

"Go it, boys," he said, "the drinks are on me if you save him."

V.

Upon a far height where the western ridge rises tortuously from the Mammoth trail Bud McWillie halted his weary horses and looked back to see if he was pursued. It was only by inadvertence that he had thus laid himself open to a federal charge—any one but a Mexican would have understood his feelings and presented him with an *Examiner*—but if Lum Martin wanted to get technical and call it robbing the mail he would give him a run for his money.

At the same time he would like to know all about it before he dipped down into the Superstition country and lost his outlook. So, throwing his animals loose, Money-getter sat on the rim of the great divide looking down into the cañon, and while he was waiting he drew out his copy of the *Examiner* and looked at his poems again. Then, all being quiet, he turned to the editorial appreciation and read it over to himself, trying to get the drift of it.

"'Peery-an Springs!'" he muttered, "never heard of it—sounds kind of familiar, too. What's this, now? 'We venture the assertion that the divine afflatus of poesy is not confined to the pie-belt of the effete East.' Ain't that a teaser, though? Aha! 'In Money-getter of Pinal, Arizona has a poet whose name will go down the ages coupled with Tupper and Villon.' That's me, all right; but who the hell is Tupper?" Here, then, was the crux of the whole critique; and, being absolutely befogged by the allusion, McWillie sat humped up over the *Examiner* like a turkey on the roof.

From the context he could gather that Tupper was a good man in his day, maybe—a thud against the hillside made him look up suddenly, but horses will fight flies, you know. He was just turning back to his problem when a .30-.30 bullet smashed against the rock below him, spattering to fragments and sending up a little cloud of smoke.

Then from the deep cañon the muffled *pop* of a carbine came to his ears, and Money-getter jumped.

From behind the shelter of his rock Money-getter looked over the Superstition country, wild-eyed—then, peering over the ridge, he saw Lum Martin, far below, urging his horse up the mountain; and down the cañon, spurring up the Mammoth trail, a perfect rout of horsemen, riding like the wind! That was enough. Money-getter did not know how it had all happened or what it was all about, but he knew that they were after *him*. Leaping upon his horse he plunged down the mountain like an outlaw bull that hears the thunder of pursuit. Carried along by the rush, his pack-animal followed for a while, trying to keep up with its mate; but at the foot of the mountain it stopped, outdistanced, and looked back.

Over the top of the hill there came a ruck of men, pouring down into the Superstition country. First of all, Lum Martin gained the summit, his horse blowing as if it was wind-broken. From the high ridge he scanned the chaos of buttes and cañons like a familiar book, looking for the dust of Money-getter; but when he saw the pack-mule he rode for it recklessly, and McFarland and his posse came stringing along after him for a mile.

Intent upon the trail the ranger passed the mule without stopping to look for marks or brands; but the posse was more light-minded. It was a long time between drinks on that trail, anyway, and as the deputies came up one after another the pursuit of Money-getter resolved itself into a caucus on the mule. Judging from brands and vents it had belonged to several people, but in a murmur that grew into a roar the awful truth came out—it was Bud McWillie's! Why, every man of them had seen it in Pinal the week before! And so Bud had turned hold-up—and poet!

"Well!" growled a cow-man, who had lost cattle, "if it's *that* cow-thief, he can go to hell for all of me—I hope the ranger gits him!" But the Pinal

crowd swung the other way. Let Martin kill him? Not much! Bud was a good fellow—good-hearted, anyway; a little wild, maybe, but then—he was a poet! The only trouble was he was traveling too fast.

"I'll tell you, boys," said McFarland, who had learned a few things about volunteer posses, "let's call it off for right now. Martin has got a big lead on us, and *he* can't catch Bud, anyhow. A drink and a good square all round is what we need—and to-morrow we'll all go up Queen Creek. That's Bud's old stamping-ground—he knows them trails like a rabbit—and ten to one he'll double on Martin and come in on us!" So it was all agreed, and that night the hardy rescuers lined up at the Casino bar to fortify themselves for the morrow.

But for Money-getter the poet there was no square meal with subsequent drinks on the house. Knowing who was after him he rode recklessly without trying to cover his trail. It was rough on the horse, but there would be lots of horses left when he, Money-getter, was dead; and he just naturally had to keep ahead of Lum Martin. His pony was pounding heavily before the sun went down, and McWillie decided to jockey Mr. Martin a little before his horse gave out altogether. So as soon as it was dark he turned off on a cattle-trail he knew and headed for Sand Creek. There was generally a bunch of Lazy V punchers camped by the upper water, and he might pick up another horse. It has never been considered quite as safe as life-insurance to steal horses from cowboys; but it was that or fight Lum Martin, and Bud still remembered that .30-.30.

Now, as luck would have it, as Money-getter came walking down the cañon about midnight, leading his horse, he came across one of the Lazy V horses, a nice nimble buckskin, close-hobbled. It was the boss cutting-pony of the outfit, and the special pet of Jimmy James of Texas; but to McWillie it was simply *a* horse. His saddle and bridle went on and the hobbles came off; and when Jimmy James went

up the cañon in the morning for his horse there was nothing to show for it but a broken-down pony and some boot-tracks in the sand.

The Lazy Vs were just saddling up to find out about this when Lum Martin rode in on them; and when he saw the stray pony he ground his teeth and spat vindictively. There was a little matter of cattle-stealing against Bud McWillie, and this was Bud's horse. Three minutes later the entire outfit was on the trail—all except Elleck Brown; he stayed in camp and let Jimmy James ride his horse, because Jimmy wanted to cut the heart out of Bud McWillie.

"God help *him*," said Jimmy, "if I git close enough to shoot!" And Lum Martin looked a little meaner than ever. There was nothing light or frolicsome, then, about their pursuit, and after they had picked up his trail the six men rode hard. True to the instinct that swings the wild fox in a circle before the hounds, Bud had doubled and turned back toward Queen Creek; and when they saw surely that he was heading for home the Lazy Vs took a chance and rode by landmarks, picking up the trail at every pass; and as they drew in upon the upper waters of Queen Creek the tracks were not half an hour old.

"I bet you we jump him at his old camp," said Martin, as they bunched up behind the last divide; and the punchers grunted approval. Whether he came out shooting or running was immaterial to them—all they wanted was to get at him quick. As they whirled down the cañon the pursuit turned into a race. The first man in won, but courtesy permitted Martin and Jimmy James to lead.

Gaunt and famished, Money-getter had just cut a can of tomatoes and was drinking greedily through the slashings when the drumming of hoofs came in on him from up the cañon.

"God a'mighty!" he gasped, and dropped everything to run. The boss cutting-pony of the Lazy Vs stood outside the cave, mouthing the water at the drinking-place, and Money-getter mounted him like a cyclone. Then in

a whirlwind of sand he went flying down the cañon; but whenever his horse struck a soft place he could hear the rumble of hoofs behind him.

For three miles the cañon stretched before him like a ragged gash in the face of nature, boxed in by overhanging walls, and a rabbit could not find a place to hide in the waste of its water-washed bed. It was a straight race, then, for the mouth of the ravine—once out he could take to the hills on foot. With his old hat flapping in the wind Bud McWillie spurred and lashed his lagging pony, taking the turns like a madman, while the fear of death clutched at his heart and choked him.

Meanwhile, in bunches of fours and fives, the friends of Money-getter the poet came stringing along up the lower cañon to rescue him from Lum Martin. They had had a drink or two apiece all around, and were hollering and laughing in the best of spirits when McFarland, who was in the lead, reined in his horse abruptly.

"Listen, fellers!" he said, holding up his hand. "I hear a horse coming! Shut up back there, can't you! Now—hear that?" A hollow rumbling echoed from up the cañon, then it changed to a roar and the scrabble of feet over rocks.

"Jerusalem!" yelled McFarland, jumping his horse out of the trail, "he's right on top of us! Give 'im the road, boys!" There was a momentary scramble, a wild scattering of the leaders, and then in a shower of stones Bud McWillie whirled around the corner and plunged into their midst. There was a yell, a thud of horses meeting, a tangle of horsemen overthrown, and McWillie shot out over their heads like a flying squirrel. Piled up in the sand, he lay on his neck for an instant, dazed; McFarland, ever ready, rushed in and grappled with him.

"You are my prisoner!" he thundered, hauling him to his feet, and reaching down he snatched money-getter from its holster and tucked it into the slack of his belt. With the fear of Lum Martin still upon him McWillie came to, scared senseless.

"Don't hurt me, boys," he stuttered, holding up his hands. "I—I don't know where I'm at!"

"Well, listen to that, will ye!" said McFarland, grinning triumphantly. "It's Money-getter, all right!" His posse burst into a roar of laughter. Here was a joke that would last as long as the drink-habit—Money-getter talking poetry in his sleep—bucked off his horse and come to spouting poetry—wow! Everybody laughed, even the fellows whose horses were down—but Money-getter stared at them dumfounded. Then from up the cañon there came another rumble and rush of feet.

"Out of the way, for God's sake!" yelled McFarland, and as the posse scrambled back among the rocks Lum Martin came tearing around the corner and dashed through the narrow lane as if he was finishing a horse-race. His little eyes were pinched down to a slit, his teeth were skinned, and when he saw Money-getter in the crowd he brought his pony up on its hind legs and whirled upon him with his gun.

"What's the meaning of this?" he shouted, as McFarland waved him back. But the chaotic arrival of Jimmy James and the Lazy Vs sent everybody dodging and not a word could be heard. McFarland threw back his vest and showed a large star pinned to his shirt; McWillie stepped cautiously behind him, and the rest was uproar and profanity.

"What you holding that man for?" demanded Martin, as soon as the rush was over, advancing threateningly upon his rival.

"Robbing the Pinal stage," said McFarland, licking his lips nervously. "Why? What ye goin' to do about it?"

"Robbing the *stage!*" shrieked Martin; hurling his revolver to the ground he cursed everything damnable, being

thoughtful enough, however, not to get personal. But when he choked for breath the real trouble began. Jimmy James walked in on Bud McWillie and began to talk. It was all kind of low and quiet, but it expressed what a man thinks when his pet horse has been stolen and "busted" over the rocks; and the men who happened to be standing behind McWillie backed off quick.

"Now, Mr. Officer," said Jimmy James, stepping back a little, "you jest give that man his gun an' turn him loose. I don't shoot any one in cold blood, but it's *him* or *me*." There was a deathlike silence for a moment, and all eyes turned to Money-getter. But there the author of "Don't crowd me, boys" weakened.

"For God's sake, boys," he cried, and his voice broke in the middle, "somebody stop him! I—I can't fight—I'm scairt!"

There was a murmur among the crowd, and Lum Martin spit scornfully; but McFarland still stood before his prisoner.

"Sorry I can't accommodate you, pardner," he said to James, "but the law don't permit it."

With his hand on his gun Jimmy James of the Lazy Vs stood scowling for a minute, then he glanced at the crowd significantly and smiled.

"Oh, that's all right, brother," he said, bowing politely, "don't mention it—quite right, I'm sure. I thought you had a *man*."

So in the crucible of life Money-getter the poet was tried and found wanting. No one could figure it out exactly, either; he had the name for being quite a scrapper. But when they brought McWillie down to Pinal old Dudfield explained it all in a minute. It was the artistic temperament that got away with him.



The Wild Man of Jersey

By Ralph D. Paine

Author of "J. Archibald McKackney: Collector of Whiskers," Etc.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

Regularly every autumn the country newspapers in Southern New Jersey report one or more wild men roaming in "the terrorized vicinity." The city editor of a Philadelphia newspaper, the *Morning Chronicle*, thinking there is good material here for a Sunday "special" sends a green reporter, one McNeal, to the locality where a wild man has been reported seen, with instructions to track him to his lair, and find out all about him. McNeal arrives at Birchtown, and puts up at the tavern of one Hooper. A party of farmers are taking supper there, after an unsuccessful hunt for the wild man. Oswald Perkins, the Birchtown correspondent of the *Chronicle*, talks so hostilely that McNeal resolves to keep his identity a secret. The next day he invades Long Swamp in his quest for the wild man, and, having suffered considerably at the hands of briars and mud, is seen by a party of farmers, and is taken for the wild man and pursued by them. He comes out of the swamp near a schoolhouse where one Miss Hilda Kent is the teacher. McNeal becomes infatuated with her, and is engaged in conversation with her when Perkins comes on the scene. Perkins places McNeal under arrest, and he is confined in the Birchtown jail, the only other occupant of which is a negro named George Alexander Brown. Mr. Hooper intoxicates the jail-keeper, and releases the two prisoners. The negro says there is a genuine wild man in the vicinity, with whom he is well acquainted, and promises to take McNeal to his haunts. McNeal and the negro, Brown, penetrate to the haunts of "the wild man of Jersey," in the swamp. McNeal photographs the wild man, and succeeds in striking up quite a friendship with him. In accordance with a prearranged scheme, the wild man approaches the schoolhouse where Miss Hilda Kent is teaching, and leaps out of a tree onto the shoulders of Mr. Oswald Perkins, who is "sparking" her. After Perkins' ignominious flight, McNeal chases the wild man away, and appears in the rôle of hero to the eyes of Miss Kent. McNeal is again guided by the negro to the haunts of the wild man, and learns from him many details regarding his past life. He promises the wild man to use his influence with the Governor of New Jersey to get some game-laws passed limiting wild-man hunting to one month of the year.

CHAPTER X.

THE APPEAL FOR JUSTICE.



S Billy McNeal strode from the clearing to embark upon his mission to the Governor of New Jersey, the wild man scampered after to escort him as far as the nearest pasture.

When they came to the parting of the ways, Jabez Habakkuk bade his champion godspeed with the exhortation:

"Try to make him view this matter seriously, my good-hearted friend. If you can persuade him to return with you for the purpose of making a per-

sonal investigation, I shall be pleased to frighten him, or to give him a chase after me. If I am notified in time I can summon one or two of the younger and sprightlier wild men from the nearby counties."

Assuring him that a spirit of levity would not be tolerated even in the Governor of the Commonwealth, McNeal hastened toward the Holly Corners turnpike. He had no intention of going to Atlantic City before making an attempt to see Hilda Kent. By making haste he would be able to pass the schoolhouse before the noon recess. He was filled with a delicious expectation, he whistled as he almost ran along the peaceful country road, and his eager imagination pictured her as

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framed in the schoolhouse doorway just as he had first seen her. How cruel it was that he could hope for no more than fleeting glimpses of her until the wild-man story was delivered to the city editor. Then he could come out into the open, laugh Oswald Perkins and the calaboose to scorn, and—oh, most delectable anticipation!—take Saturday and Sunday off, and be free for two whole days with Hilda Kent. It was dreadful to have to go so far away as Atlantic City, but he could not play the hero consistently if he were deaf to the trumpet-call of duty.

Thus bemused with pleasing dreams, the emissary to the governor came in sight of the schoolhouse, and stared with sickening dismay at its shuttered windows. The flagpole was bare, the door closed, and the whole aspect of the place was desolate and abandoned.

"No school to-day. What has happened to her," he groaned in a dazed way as he climbed the hill. "Perhaps she is ill after yesterday's upset with the wild man. And I was a part of that beastly farce. I ought to be shot."

He rattled the door, peered through the cracks of the shutters, and made a gloomy circuit of the building, as if he hoped to find the beautiful schoolmistress hidden in some crevice or corner. Where was her boarding-place? Alas, he did not know. What a fool he had been not to ask her for some kind of an address! If he should venture into the village of Holly Corners in quest of her, he might be picked up by some idiot of a constable and turned over to Justice Perkins at Birchtown. Such a mishap might disastrously interfere with the case of the wild man and the governor.

But the infatuated youth could not bear to think of going away without some tidings of Hilda. It had been his purpose to walk along by-roads and lanes to a railroad-station several miles beyond Holly Corners, and unobtrusively board the first train coastward-bound. But now he was fast throwing discretion to the winds. Poor girl!—why, she might be flat on her back with nervous prostration for all he knew. Wretched,

counterfeit hero that he was, he wished he had tried to beat out the addled brains of Jabez Habakkuk Botts sooner than permit him to frighten her.

Growing more and more reckless of consequences, the sad-hearted crusader moved along the wood-road that would lead him straight to Holly Corners, one of whose modest dwellings must shelter the vanished schoolmistress. He was not so distraught, however, that he failed to observe a carryall coming toward him, the horse jogging clumsily, as if it were falling asleep in harness. The melancholy pedestrian stepped hastily aside among the screening trees to wait until the road was clear. The carryall halted when almost abreast of him, and a coatless youth hopped down to buckle a dangling strap, while the two women on the rear seat continued their conversation, which came to McNeal as follows:

"I'm glad there won't be any school for a week. I was going to keep my Freddie and Ruby home, anyhow. If you could have seen 'em when they rushed into the house yesterday, their eyes poppin' clear out of their heads, both yelling at once that teacher had been snatched away from 'em by a wild man! My heart ain't strong, as you know, and I was taken with one of my sinkin'-spells, and had to lay on the lounge till pa found out it wasn't so about Miss Kent. But all the children saw the wild man *this* time."

"My little girls aren't going to be let stir outside their own dooryard till the wild man is captured," said the other matron. "He never was so bold and fearless as he's been this season. I guess this term of school is spoiled. Miss Kent went home this morning, because she wouldn't have any scholars to teach for some time."

"When did she say she'd be back, when you saw her at the station?" queried the mother of Freddie and Ruby.

"Oh, nothing definite. She laughed and said wild horses wouldn't drag the children to school, so she was going home to tend to some important business for her father. She's a sweet little

thing, ain't she? And the children are dreadful fond of her. And she's just splendidly educated and refined, they tell me. I wonder why she came down here most a hundred miles from home to take a district-school? S'pose she's been jilted and has a secret sorrow?"

"Git up!" quoth the young jehu from his perch, and the drowsy horse resumed its shuffling gait. The carryall crawled out of ear-shot, and the eaves-dropper among the trees shook his fist after it as he muttered with a black scowl:

"Why the devil didn't you tell me where she has gone to? Now I have gone and lost her, indeed! Well, thank the good Lord, she is as well as ever, and my conscience doesn't hurt quite as much as it did a little while ago. Oh, hang the wild man and his confounded affairs! Blessed if I wouldn't like to pass a law to make an open season the whole year round, no barring bear-traps, pump-guns, and poison."

These venomous thoughts were fleeting, however, and leaving his heart behind him the wayfarer trudged doggedly on his way. At length he found himself aboard an afternoon train, and after a fretful journey was deposited at Atlantic City in the early evening. To be propelled from the heart of Long Swamp and the companionship of George and Jabez Habakkuk to the thronging "board-walk" and the jostling hotels of this vivacious coastwise resort was a contrast so violent as to be startling in the extreme. McNeal looked askance at his stained and battered clothing, and felt more genuine timidity than had plagued him amid the perils of the chase.

He sought the hotel usually honored by the governor's patronage, and was more than ever abashed as he steered his course through the brilliant corridor and its company of smartly dressed men and women.

"But there isn't a girl here who can hold a candle to Hilda Kent, for all their fuss and feathers," he thought. "And these johnnies who think they are having a good time don't know what real sport is, for they've never trotted

around with a combination like Jabez, George, and Oswald Perkins."

The clerk to whom he applied for information concerning Governor Newberry was curt of speech and suspicious of manner as he cast a lordly eye over the person of the youthful pilgrim.

"He is at dinner with some friends. Better come around in the morning," he condescended to reply.

"I want a room and bath, and I will see him when I get good and ready," was the equally snappish rejoinder. "And as I am a bit shy of baggage I'll pay in advance to keep you from losing any sleep about me."

Whereupon the guest turned on his heel and sought a haberdasher's shop, where he plunged heavily in the matter of fresh linen. After making himself as presentable as possible he sauntered into the hotel dining-room, and rashly rejoicing in this glimpse of civilization, ordered champagne with his dinner.

While working his way through the elaborate menu, McNeal let his interested gaze rove in search of the governor, whom he finally discovered at a table in a seaward alcove. The reporter determined to entrap him during the evening and to present the case of Jabez Habakkuk Botts with the eloquence that had begun to surge under the spell of the champagne.

After a while McNeal became conscious that he was being stared at from a table somewhat off to the right of him. He had noticed the broad back of a man dining alone at this table, but had not given him a second thought. Now, under the hypnotic influence of a scrutiny which he could fairly feel, McNeal turned to look more closely at this inquisitive guest.

To his horror the bulky man who had turned in his chair to face him was revealed as the city editor of the *Chronicle*, that awful personage whose slightest word had made this young reporter tremble in his shoes. This portentous figure of a man was glaring at McNeal and also at the bottle on the table, and the victim read his thoughts as clearly as if they had been shouted across the room:

"I sent you to find a wild man. What are you doing behind a champagne-bottle in an Atlantic City hotel?"

McNeal felt his face grow hot, the food choked him, and he could only fidget miserably and wait for a chance to explain his singular mission. What if the governor should jeer him out of court? What would the city editor say then? Ah, better a supper from George's humble skillet than the misery of this suspense!

McNeal drew a long breath of relief when at length the city editor lumbered leisurely toward his prey. Hastily the reporter stammered, as soon as his lord and master had come within ear-shot:

"It—it isn't as bad as it looks, sir. This is part of my game. I give you my word that it is."

The city editor's keen eyes twinkled behind his glasses, but his accents were severe:

"So here is where you ran him to earth! What's the wild man's room-number? Bosh, McNeal! Take the first train back to the city, do you hear? Tell the night desk that I will attend to your case when I get home. I thought better of you than this."

The disgraced reporter had gained a new confidence in himself during his recent experiences, and a city editor was, after all, only a *caged* species of wild man. So he found voice to say:

"That isn't fair. I've got my wild man corralled all right, where nobody else can find him, and he has sent me down here to see the governor. I am a special envoy from the associated wild men of New Jersey. That's why I'm here, sir."

"Then you will come right along with me and we'll tackle the governor together," exclaimed the city editor with a skeptical grin. "I am just about going to call this bluff of yours."

McNeal followed meekly to the alcove, where the city editor was greeted with cordial familiarity. Frowning at the silent reporter as if he were a truant schoolboy, the city editor explained to the governor:

"I don't want to intrude, my dear sir,

but this cub of mine may amuse you and your friends. I have caught him playing hooky and he has the nerve to claim that he's full of important business with you. Speak your piece, McNeal. It's your only chance."

The governor nodded at the lad with a smile of recognition and said with a sweep of his arm:

"These friends of mine are all statesman, or think they are, and their opinions may be valuable. Fire ahead, my son. You look as if you had been caught with the goods on."

Billy McNeal faltered before this imposing battery, but stiffened by the thought of Jabez Habakkuk Botts waiting for him in the swamp, he began very earnestly:

"The city editor assigned me to run down and capture the wild man of Jersey, gentlemen. It was a dangerous and almost hopeless undertaking, but I found him and became his friend. As dean of the tribe he has sent me to beg of you, Governor Newberry, that the game-laws of this state be so amended as to give him a close season of eleven months. At present he is hunted——"

"Hold on there," roared the governor. "You make me dizzy. Waiter, open that window. I need cool air. Now take it easy, Mr. McNeal. You are crowding us. Did you dream any of this?"

The reporter's face was so desperately serious and his voice so freighted with impassioned earnestness that the other guests checked their laughter and paid attention to the delegate from Long Swamp as he carefully outlined the career of Jabez Habakkuk Botts, together with the tale of his grievances. It was a long story, for McNeal gave them his own impressions and permitted the company to perceive how deeply his sympathies had been enlisted in the cause of the wild man, as an individual and a species. His peroration was a direct appeal to the governor:

"You are a sportsman, sir, and you are proud of your native state. Are you going to stand by and see the last wild man run off his feet and hounded to an untimely doom for lack of a game

law? The noble specimen whose cause I plead has given me all the data. It is in my note-book, and I can go over it with you at any time you say."

The president of the State Senate who sat at the governor's right flourished his napkin enthusiastically and cried:

"Bully for you, young man. You have won me over for one. I am with you heart and soul. Newberry, this act must be framed and passed without fail. If your administration doesn't accomplish anything else, this noble measure will immortalize it. To think we have been letting the wild man hasten toward such a dreadful fate with never a hand raised to save him. We must forestall the opposition party on this measure."

"Most of the wild men are in their ranks now," growled another portly statesman. "I wonder why they don't look after their own people."

"The amendment will be drafted this very night, Mr. McNeal," laughed the governor. "And I shall depend on you to help me outline the bill. An open season through September, did I understand you to say?"

"Yes, sir. That is what they want. By the way, would you like to join a hunt? I can have one specially arranged for you whenever you like. It's bully cross-country sport. And we can round up a young one in your honor."

"Like it? I'm your man!" And the governor's eyes sparkled. "But I can't do any wild-man hunting this year. I'm off for the Canadian Rockies after bear next week. How about September of next year? The law will be in force then, and the game will be in prime condition. I will make it a positive engagement with you."

"And make it for me," "Count me in," "Is there room for one more?" chorused the governor's companions. As soon as he could make himself heard Governor Newberry suggested to McNeal:

"I think that perhaps the most distinguished statesman of the Republican party, whose name begins with Theodore, would be glad of an invitation. I will see to it that he is asked."

McNeal modestly excused himself and retired to the lobby to await the further pleasure of the Governor of New Jersey. When the reporter had left the room the city editor, who had been asked to join the party for cognac and cigars, leaned toward the governor and asked rather anxiously:

"Do you mean to say that you are willing to stand for this crazy proposition? I mean, will you let us print it?"

"My dear sir, I see nothing crazy about it," warmly rejoined his excellency. "It is immensely entertaining, it will harm nobody, and I assure you that there are many laws on our statute-books not one bit more foolish. I believe in the wild man and his cause, and you are at liberty to print this evening's interview word for word. Furthermore, I propose to give young McNeal a signed statement as long as his arm if the boy wants it. Upon my soul, he would produce Santa Claus if you gave him the assignment. He is a wonder. Of course, I am going to stand by him."

"Well, by Jupiter," cried the city editor. "The youngster *has* landed a corker of a story after all. I think I'd better go out and apologize to him."

He found his reporter hunched in one porch-chair with his feet in another, scribbling for dear life in a frayed note-book.

Looking up with puckered brow he remarked:

"I am clinching the governor's interview while it is fresh in my mind, sir. I wish my photographs were developed so that I could show them to you."

"Photographs! Have you got the negatives with you? Splendid!" shouted the city editor. "Now I know you are not faking. For Heaven's sake, give me your films and I'll get 'em developed to-night, if I have to break into every photographer's shop in town. And how about your story? When can we have it?"

"I must return to Long Swamp to write it. I gave the wild man my word," gravely returned the reporter. "And he will be fairly foaming at the mouth to hear how my mission works

out. I'll rush the stuff through to you as fast as I can."

"The office will pay your bills if you want to come back to Atlantic City and write it," cordially suggested the great man. "You deserve a little rest and comfort. You may have a week to do it in if you like."

"I can write it in a good deal less time than that," replied McNeal, "but I must do it in the swamp. I can't go back on old Jabez. But I'd very much like the extra time for myself."

"To spend with the wild man?" And the city editor's eye was searching. "You must have got mighty chummy with him."

"Not exactly that," said McNeal, evading the other's gaze. "But there's something else I lost in that part of the country and I want to find it——"

"Hum-m—does she live in the swamp, too?" grimly chuckled the city editor. "Well, you have earned your week off, I guess. Here comes the governor. Fix up your wild-man interview with him while I hustle out with your negatives."

The other statesmen pleaded so hard that they might have a hand in blocking out this interesting piece of legislation that by common consent the party adjourned to a private parlor of the hotel. The business was made difficult by the suggestions showered upon the governor, and the hour was late when McNeal was able to tuck a rough draft of the amendment in his pocket. Then the city editor burst into the group with a triumphant shout:

"Developed, and two sets of prints in three hours! And they are splendid, unique, colossal! You can fairly hear him bark and gnash his teeth. Wild? Why, he's eighteen carat, all wool and a yard wide, gentlemen. McNeal, take this set of prints back with you to show him. I'll bet ten dollars he will be afraid of himself when he sees them."

The governor was vastly interested in the striking series of pictures, and when he saw Jabez Habakkuk Botts, the pride and terror of Long Swamp, in the act of charging straight at him on all-fours, he nearly fell out of his chair. Raising his stein, he cried delightedly:

"The monarch of the Jersey forest, gentlemen! And this young hero and wilderness-hunter was brave enough to face him in his lair. Why, I can't look at the photos without a shudder. Comrades, I hear the call of the wild. Let us rise and drink to the health of the fearless young sportsman, William McNeal."

CHAPTER XI.

JABEZ HABAKKUK IN ACTION.

On the day following his successful mission to Atlantic City, the elated reporter was able to rejoin Jabez Habakkuk Botts without mishap. By this time he dared venture into the swamp without a guide, and Long Swamp had been robbed of its terrors. The wild man was preparing his simple meal of two ears of corn and a handful of mushrooms when McNeal entered the clearing. Dropping the viands on a platter of green leaves Jabez rushed toward his young friend and clasped him to his breast. The youth staggered free of this embrace after being more or less scratched by the dangling necklace, and half-suffocated in a deluge of whiskers.

"An effete civilization could not hold me any longer," he cried cheerfully. "Calm be your slumbers, O child of the forest. The game-laws will include you in the next edition."

Mr. Botts that was raised his voice in almost breathless emotion: "Is it true? Have you indeed prevailed with the governor?"

"I should say yes, and with a batch of legislators besides," replied McNeal. "I made a speech which brought down the house. They endorsed me to a man, and I have a copy of the law in my pocket. Also some photographs of you which took 'em by storm. Now, aren't you glad that you didn't chase me up a tree that first day?"

The wild man wept tears of joy. They rolled down his beard and hung among its cockle-burrs like handfuls of diamonds. But when McNeal displayed the photographs he leaped sev-

eral feet in air and grasped them with a hoarse cry. Swiftly scampering to the mouth of his shelter of logs and boughs he gazed at the pictures one by one, long and gloatingly. Evidently they pleased his fancy, but his demeanor was also that of profound astonishment.

"I have not seen myself in ten years, except in the mirrored surface of a brook or pond," he muttered at length, after a long silence. "Do I look as wild as that? Are these pictures true to life?"

"Yes, you are at least that fearsome, if not more so, Mr. Botts. In fact, as I saw you descending from a tree upon the neck of Mr. Oswald Perkins, you were far more awe-inspiring than you appear in any of these snap shots. Do you really like them?"

"Yes and no," was the hesitating answer. "The general effect is satisfactory, but there is a hint of mildness, almost of gentleness in the expression of my features, as if I were really becoming tamer."

"But you are not really ferocious at heart," rejoined his young friend. "In fact, I should be inclined to class you rather with such a vanished species of big game as the shaggy bison than with the larger carnivora, or with the grizzly, for example."

"I *am* getting tame again," mourned the wild man. "I can feel it stealing over me. My days at large are numbered."

"Don't chuck it up until after the governor's hunt next fall," begged McNeal. "He'd be awfully disappointed. Throw all regrets away, that's a good wild man, and help me write my story."

Mr. Botts consented to begin the collaboration, and the reporter sat himself down on a peeled log with pencil and "copy-paper." He wrote steadily until twilight, but there were baffling chapters of the wild man's life which he perversely refused to illumine. Again and again his biographer recurred to the vital question—what had really made him wild? But Jabez Habakkuk became taciturn when hard-pressed for an answer, and recovered his vi-

vacuity only when the chronicle returned to his exploits since taking to the woods. During one of these awkward intervals he broke out in a tone of emphatic finality:

"I will tell you that the secret of my life has been inscribed on a roll of bark and is buried in this clearing. It may be that at some future time I shall find cause to dig it up. If so, you shall be informed. But it is useless now to try to make me divulge the mystery."

McNeal had to be content with this tantalizing glimpse of a story which was beyond his grasp, so he toiled steadily until he was too weary to drive a pencil. Shortly after he had laid his work aside George came plowing through the swamp, bending under the weight of a bulging sack.

"Out ag'in an' in ag'in so soon, boss," he chuckled. "I's been so worried 'bout you that I clean forgot my own troubles. The wild man told me you was busy with his doin's."

"What troubles have you on your mind, George?" asked McNeal.

"Got a yello' gal in Birchtown, boss. She's my honey, an' it breaks my heart to be sojournin' in here like a possum in a gum-tree. I sneaked out las' night to try for to see her, but I didn't dare go far enough. On the way back I picked up one kind o' snack or another that wa'n't nailed down, an' fetched 'em along in my grub bag to share with the wild man. Help you'se'f, suh."

"You stay herē to supper with us, George," invited McNeal, "and we will go back to your place before dark. Mr. Botts will spend the night with us over there, where I can work at your table and have plenty of candles."

The wild man consented with so little fuss that George was moved to reflect aloud: "He sure is gittin' tamer. Never did this before."

"What did I tell you?" cried Jabez Habakkuk, greatly annoyed. "Even George notices it."

The negro's unlucky comment so saddened Mr. Botts that he was a poor comrade at supper; and in silence he followed the others through the swamp.

Nor could he be cheered until McNeal was ready to resume his literary labors by candle-light at George's cabin. They had made such a gratifying beginning of the story that McNeal was in hopes of being able to finish it with one more day's hard work. Mr. Botts was invited to share the hut for the night, but he declined with considerable irritation, as if stung by the conviction that he was lapsing into tameness. Resolved to live it down, he swarmed nimbly up a spreading oak and curled himself for slumber in the cradling branches.

"Ain't he spry-footed an' barbarious?" admiringly exclaimed George. "Sleepin' in a tree jes' like he had fur on him. Good night to you way up yonder, wild man. If you don't sleep mighty tight you's liable to break loose an' squash yourself."

The camp was astir shortly after daybreak, for the reporter and George were awakened by the wild man's chant to the rising sun, a rhythmic, wailing noise in which might have been detected fragments of his earlier genius as a poet of solitude. It was rather uncanny to hear this anthem descending from the tree-top in which Mr. Botts had nestled overnight, and the drowsy negro remarked uneasily:

"I reckon it 'u'd take me a long while to git used to that spooky alarm-clock up yonder, boss."

A little later in the morning the wild man expressed his willingness to resume the biographical task, and the twain wrote and talked steadily through the long day, George remaining tactfully in the background and moving on tiptoe about the hut. The end of the story was well in sight when the fagged reporter dropped his pencil, shoved his hands through his rumpled hair, and addressed Mr. Botts:

"Do you know, this is going to be much more than a Sunday newspaper story. We have set a new pace for the school of animal-story writers. They can only make bluffs about what their little brothers of the wild think of things. And if they don't guess right they get unmercifully clubbed with the big stick. They have to work from the

outside inside, while we are writing it all from the inside outside."

George dropped his skillet with a crash, and implored from the door of the cabin:

"Don't say it ag'in, boss. 'Scuse me, but you's gone an' set my brain to bumpin'. From the outside inside—inside outside—topside. Lawd a'mighty, man, it's terrible to try an' find a way outen that mess o' language."

Commanding George to move out of range, McNeal resumed his glowing summary of the literary achievement in hand:

"We'll make them all sit up, won't we, from Doctor Long to the gentleman with the hyphenated and reversible name? How about it, George?"

George dodged as if missiles were in the air, and expostulated from a safe distance:

"Go easy, can't you, boss? Hy-hy-hypumated is a double-barrel word that makes me gun-shy an' trembly. It wouldn't take much more to turn me plumb wild like our friend yonder."

Meanwhile young William McNeal had been weaving plans for the future. Next morning he would bid his comrades an affectionate farewell, intending to keep in touch with their fortunes, however, and to see to it that George was transplanted to a less perilous environment. His first business was to get his story in the mail, after which he would take the leave of absence awarded by the city editor, and straightway set out in pursuit of Hilda Kent, the vanished schoolmistress. There was a spark of real heroism in his devotion to duty, while his distracting inclinations were all pulling him another way. No longer bothering his head about constables, for he would be free to prove his identity, McNeal determined to make a house-to-house exploration of Holly Corners until he should have run down the home address of his adored.

With this purpose in his heart, he wrote the concluding paragraphs of his story in a flutter of impatience, and by candle and firelight read the whole aloud to Jabez Habakkuk Botts. There

was genuine emotion in the wild man's harsh voice as he paid his biographer this grateful tribute of appreciation:

"Your work reveals a sympathetic understanding of my career and ambitions which is amazing in one so young. But far more than this, I am under the greatest obligation to you for your noble crusade in behalf of my kind. Perhaps the day will come when you may need me. If so, I will respond to your call at peril of my life."

McNeal was so deeply affected by this speech that he could only stammer:

"We—we shall meet again, Mr. Botts, and if you ever need me just raise the long yell."

Bright and early next morning the trio set forth for the border of the swamp, George and the wild man as a guard of honor for their departing comrade. When an open stretch of pasture was discerned through the trees, a whimsical idea occurred to McNeal, and he promptly suggested:

"Mr. Botts, I used to be an intercollegiate sprinter and was rated as a champion as far as the quarter-mile. Now you pride yourself on your speed, and you are trained down as hard as nails. Perhaps I am not in your class at all, but I hate to part without a friendly brush. I may never have another chance to toe the scratch with a wild man, and you have aroused my sporting blood."

Jabez Habakkuk fairly chortled with joy, and began frisking through the bushes as he replied: "With the greatest pleasure. You could not have made a happier suggestion. The pasture turf is smooth and level, and cannot be seen from the road. It is for you to name the distance."

They hastened into the pasture, and McNeal scanned the green expanse until his eye fell upon a lone tree at the farther end of the field. This he judged to be about a quarter of a mile from where they happened to be standing. The tree was agreed upon as the finish-mark for the race, and the intercollegiate sprinter ventured to suggest:

"You are wearing sandals of hide with soft soles, which give you a grip

on the turf. I happen to have a pair of running shoes in my suit-case. Do you mind if I put them on? It is no more than fair, I think."

His rival cordially consented, and proceeded to wrap his beard three times around his neck and tie the ends together lest he step on it and trip himself. George was to act as starter, and his face shone with childish delight as he dug a line in the turf with his toe.

"I wants to bet on you, boss," he cried, "but my bes' judgment tells me to go th' limit on the wild man. This runnin' is only play with you, but it's his steady job. If I wa'n't so twisty-legged an' splay-footed, I'd turn loose myself. I's made some tall git-aways from chicken-houses in my time. Line up there, now. I'll follow along with your bag, boss."

The rivals crouched on the springy turf, the wild man bent so low that McNeal wondered if he intended sprinting on all fours.

"It will break his heart if I happen to beat him," the youth reflected. "His infernal professional pride is at stake again."

Just then George emitted a terrific whoop of:

"Go! Wow-wow-wow! Burn th' wind."

The sprinters shot away on even terms, McNeal rather chagrined to note from the tail of his eye that whereas he had been famous for gaining a yard or two off the mark, he had not wrested the slightest advantage from his gaunt antagonist. The collegian was running with head erect and elbows squared, in faultless stride and form. The wild man was stooped almost double, shambling as it were; yet strain as he would McNeal could not steal an inch from him. Before half the distance had been covered the slim youth felt his lack of training. He was in acute distress but fighting pluckily, while at his elbow the wild man skimmed over the ground like a grotesque machine.

Then to the reporter's amazement, the elderly Mr. Botts began to draw away, fairly romping into the home-stretch. His pinioned whiskers had

pulled free, and streamed in clouds over his shoulders. His bare legs made a brown blur against the landscape, and his scanty raiment whipped in the wind with the sound of rushing wings. As he neared the lone tree which marked the finish of the course, he waved his arms and had plenty of breath for an ear-splitting shriek of triumph and defiance.

McNeal was laboring several yards in the rear, manfully striving to spurt, but his head was dizzy and his vision was fogged. Swaying as he ran, he failed to see a half-buried stone in his path. His foot struck it with great force and he sprawled headlong to earth. As he struggled to rise, he saw the victorious wild man dash past the finish-mark, wheel with incredible agility and fairly sprint up the trunk of the tree as if he were bewitched. Leaping from branch to branch he raised his voice in joyous clamor, until he perceived that his rival was unable to walk without painful effort. As Mr. Botts dropped earthward and hastened to the rescue, McNeal shouted:

"I turned my ankle, and I guess I can't go far to-day. It is only a sprain."

Forgotten was the victory as the wild man hallooed to George, who was puffing toward the tragic scene. They made a chair of their hands and tenderly bore the sufferer to the border of the swamp. It was very apparent that the sprained ankle had interfered with the young man's pilgrimage; and the decision of the hasty council of war was that he must be taken back to George's cabin with the help of his sturdy friends.

"But my story must be mailed to-day," groaned the victim. "I'll go crazy if it isn't."

"I'll look after it, boss," chimed in George. "I kin make a sneak as far as my cousin's house after sundown, an' he'll drap it in the pos'-office. Don't you fret your haid a minute. Nobody gwine to ketch me."

This seemed to be the only way out of the unhappy dilemma. A pair of crutches was hastily fashioned from

saplings, and the painful journey into the swamp begun. For much of the distance McNeal roosted upon the shoulders of one or the other of his friends, who made light of the burden. They ferried him on the hollow log, and hoisted him across fallen trees with prodigious exertion, while he marveled at their deftness and endurance.

As soon as the patient had been laid in George's hut, the wild man galloped off to seek certain roots and herbs for brewing an embrocation which he swore had wonderful healing powers. McNeal fretted and fumed and was poor company indeed; but George's good-nature was unfailing, as he strove in his simple way to make his "boss" more comfortable.

After the wild man's return, the negro was entrusted with the bulky envelope addressed: "City Editor, *Chronicle*, Philadelphia." McNeal was eager to see him under way, and the hours dragged horribly before the sun went down and the messenger was willing to hazard the journey toward Birchtown and his cousin's house.

"It is life and death, George," exclaimed the reporter. "If that story is lost I will never get over it. I can't bear to think of writing it all over again. Are you sure you won't run into trouble?"

"That lonesome calaboose don't git this nigger no more no time, boss. And this yere bundle o' big words is as safe as if it was in Philadelphia this minute. See you all by midnight, sure. So-long."

CHAPTER XII.

BLACK PERFIDY.

While the crippled young athlete, reporter and lover was being nursed by the wild man in the depths of Long Swamp, George was pursuing his devious way toward Birchtown. Hugged tight to his ragged bosom was the precious package of "big words" which the dusty messenger regarded with positive awe. George realized the momentous import of his errand, and was resolved to do or die.

Across fields and through orchards he flitted, picking a sure way in the darkness of early evening, with the vigilance of an owl. He became even more cautious as he drew near to his cousin's small farm; and crawling on his stomach into the meadow back of the barn, he reconnoitered for some time. Then stealthily moving as far as the pig-pen, he surveyed the dim outline of the house.

No curtains obscured the lighted windows, and the cousin and his numerous family could be discerned in silhouette, bobbing from one room to another. George sidled closer, and counted these figures on his fingers. The tally was complete, and no strangers were visible. Presently the family became assembled in the parlor, and to the astonishment of the onlooker one and all dropped from his sight as if a signal had been given. He was sure that they had not left the room, but it appeared as if the floor might have given way and let them into the cellar.

George scratched his head and tiptoed nearer, until his chin rested against a window-sill. He was fairly astounded to discover that the family was kneeling in a group, surrounding the bowed head of his cousin, whose voice was now lifted in quavering prayer.

"Ain't it jes' beautiful," whispered George. "Mebbe they is sendin' up their petitions to the Mos' High for this poor, wanderin' black sheep. How long since he been doin' this, eh? It's new to me. He ain't never showed prayerful symptoms no time before."

He waited until the pious circle had arisen amid a rousing chorus of amens. Then he whistled softly, repeated the signal with shriller pitch, and rapped on the window-pane. He beheld his godly cousin start for the door, halt, and listen with a hand at his ear as if to make conjecture certain. Before George could take warning this perfidious kinsman of his caught up a tin fish-horn from a table and blew three long blasts. "George was rooted in his tracks, bewildered by this mysterious maneuver.

The barn-door rattled behind him, there was a swift rush of feet, and be-

fore he had more than turned to fly, poor George was violently assaulted and hurled to earth. Gallantly he fought, but the odds were overwhelming. Presently the two breathless constables were able to click handcuffs on his wrists, and the courier from Long Swamp was dragged into the path of light that streamed from the open door. The voice of his cousin floated out to the dazed captive's ear:

"Has he done quit ragin', constables? You was sure ready an' sudden when the signal blowed. Take him away an' put him where he belongs. Lock him up good an' tight this time."

"Hold on here," yelled George. "This yere preceedin' needs a whole lot o' explainin', you hear me? Why you deliver me up into the hands of the inimy? I got to know 'fore I stir a step, eh?"

The cousin rolled his eyes heavenward and loftily vouchsafed:

"I done 'sperienced religion las' Sunday at the Birchtown Baptis' Church. My load o' sin is took away for nevermore. An' may my right hand cleave to th' roof o' my mouth if I tolerates any more jail-breakin', chicken-grabbin' limb of Satans around my door. Go 'long with you, George Alexander Brown, an' 'cept your lawful punishments in a meek an' lowly spirit. Whom th' Lawd loveth He chastises. I seen my duty, an' I reckoned you'd come snoopin' 'round here 'bout now after vittles. Thank you, mister constables, an' take him away."

The door slammed, and the aggrieved prisoner was left alone with his captors. They had begun to drag him toward the road when an awful recollection made him forget his own woes. With a dry sob he implored:

"I done lost a package while we was scrimmagin'. Please, policemen, please lemme find it. If you don't, I'll flop on th' ground an' fight till I'm dead. Give me my little bundle an' I'll stay in th' calaboose a hundred an' 'leven years without kickin', bless th' Lawd."

"Some of his plunder," grumbled a constable. "Better hunt it up and turn it over to Squire Perkins."

At the name of Perkins, George burst

into such wild lamentations that his keepers kicked and cuffed him into whimpering subjection. After a brief search they discovered the fat envelope where George had let it fall in the struggle. The sight of it aroused him to fight afresh, and he could not be made docile until he was soundly rapped over the head with a fence-picket. Even then his muffled prayers arose from where a fat constable was sitting on his stomach.

"Gimme my bundle o' words. Oh, oh, I can't lose 'em."

In vain he begged to be allowed to leave the packet at the post-office. The constables had read the superscription and one of them gruffly argued:

"Looks to me like it belongs to Oswald Perkins, anyhow. It's wrote to the editor of his Philadelphia newspaper. Guess he dropped it in the road. The coon must think there's money in it. This post-office holler is all a bluff to get away from us."

So they marched George straight to the dreaded calaboose, thrust him weeping into the same cell from which he had so joyfully emerged in company with his boss, and left him a prey to harrowing emotions while they went in search of Oswald Perkins, Justice of the Peace. Him they found in the bar-room of Henry Hooper's tavern discussing local politics with the landlord thereof. The excited constables burst into this dialogue like a brace of bombshells, shouting:

"We've got the nigger—that broke jail, Oswald. Got him safe behind the bars again. He fit like a tiger, but we downed 'im. Gosh, but that was a tussle."

"Good work! Have a drink on me!" cried Perkins. "But where is his partner, the young fellow that let him out of jail? He's the most dangerous one. Could you get any information out of the nigger?"

"No-o," stammered one constable, he that was keeper of the jail. "We hadn't got around to that yet. You can sweat it out of the nigger yourself, can't ye?"

"What's that crumpled-up envelope in

your hand?" demanded the justice. "Anything to do with the nigger?"

"Yes, we took it away from him. I was meanin' to turn it over to you first thing. He cussed and wrestled for it as if it was worth its weight in gold. We think it belongs to you. Guess you ain't had time to miss it yet."

Oswald Perkins took the important-looking envelope, fingered it curiously and slowly read the address thereon. He was not slow-witted, and it came to him like a flash that he held in his hands the "wild man story" of that bogus whisky-drummer, naturalist and vagrant whom he had pursued and made prisoner. He had shrewdly suspected the young stranger's identity all along. Here was a bulky manuscript, plainly intended to be mailed to the city editor of the *Chronicle*, which had been wrested from the negro with whom the stranger had fled the jail.

Now Oswald Perkins was not only a prey to jealousy, but he was also consumed with hatred for the youth who had baffled and made him ridiculous at every turn. A plan of action almost instantly occurred to him. If this document proved to be the wild man story, then he would turn it to his own uses. The *Chronicle* had treated him outrageously in sending a man down into his territory without informing him of the fact. There were other newspapers in Philadelphia. Any one of them would be glad to pay him well for an exclusive "feature story" of this kind. And it could be published under the name of Oswald Perkins.

Absorbed in these thoughts Perkins was unaware of the landlord's earnest scrutiny. At length the latter asked:

"Where did you lose it, Oswald?"

"Oh, this? Why—why—it must have dropped out of my coat late this afternoon," hastily lied the other, and Henry Hooper knew that he was lying. "I had it ready to mail to my Philadelphia paper to-night. Now it has missed the last train till morning, confound it. It's an important article I spent a lot of time on. I guess I'll be decent and give the nigger something for finding it. I think I'll go over and talk to him."

Meanwhile Mr. Henry Hooper had been interested in his own thoughts. He was even more certain than Perkins that this stout envelope was the property of his vanished "side-partner." He knew that George and young McNeal had sought a hiding-place together, and what was more natural than that the negro should have been entrusted with letters or manuscript to mail? And having seen McNeal's handwriting on his own tavern-register, Mr. Hooper was putting two and two together with much ease and rapidity. In fact, his mental processes were keeping fully abreast of the unrighteous cogitations of Oswald Perkins. If both men were playing with marked cards, the landlord held by far the stronger hand. With specious sympathy, however, he expressed his pleasure at the recovery of so large a consignment of the Perkins journalistic talent, and kindly suggested:

"You'll be passing by here on your way back from the jail. Why don't you leave the package here and let me stick it in the desk? You might forget it, and that town jail is a dum' sight easier to get out of than to get into."

"Good idea," replied the wholly unsuspecting Perkins. "I guess it will be as safe with you as anybody. I'll be back inside of an hour, sure."

While Mr. Oswald Perkins was speeding toward the jail his absorbed reflections focused themselves in this wise:

"I've been wanting to chuck up the *Chronicle* and get the local job for the *Philadelphia Tribune* for the last six months. If I put my own name on this stuff, providin' it's first-class, and send it to the *Tribune*, who's going to know anything about it? The *Tribune* folks won't give me away, that's a cinch. The nigger can't swear I ever saw the envelope, and it's easy to shut him up good and tight if I have to. I'll just about see to it that he's sent up to the penitentiary for two or three years, anyhow. I can drum up a dozen cases against him for one thing or another."

Landlord Henry Hooper had sauntered out to his front porch and was

gazing after the hurrying figure of Mr. Perkins.

"He's a liar, and I figger he aims to be a thief," mused McNeal's side-partner with a grim smile. "He lied about that envelope being his'n. And he's mediatin' some monkey-doodle business as sure as God made little apples. I don't know where that young side-partner of mine is layin' up, but I just do know that he wants that piece of mail-matter to reach the proper parties. But it ain't as easy a job as hookin' the jail-key from that punkin-headed constable."

However, Mr. Hooper was a person of unusual inventiveness for his station in life, and presently he withdrew to his cubby-hole of a private office, locked himself in and laid the battered envelope upon the table. Adjusting his steel-rimmed spectacles he bent over the packet with grave deliberation.

"Pshaw, it ain't as hard as I thought," he muttered.

Proceeding to the deserted kitchen he set the tea-kettle on the range, and when it began to blow steam through its nose with a genial gurgle, he waved the envelope to and fro in the cloud of vapor. Dexterously loosening the flap with a pen-handle he returned to his office and extracted the folded manuscript. He had only to read the heading of the first page to know that he was making no mistake:

THE WILD MAN OF JERSEY.

From W. McNeal.

"The boy must have wrote himself black in the face by the heft of it," said Mr. Hooper admiringly. "He caught up with the crittur all right. Wish I had time to read it. It must be better'n a dime novel. But I must stick to plain burglarin' to-night."

Rummaging through his desk he unearthed a tablet of large-sized writing-paper. By good luck the sheets were almost a match for those of the manuscript. Tearing off enough of these blank sheets to serve his purpose he carefully folded them twice and slid them into the mud-stained envelope which had contained McNeal's story.

Working rapidly, but with care, the landlord next resealed this envelope with daubs of mucilage, and then weighed it in his palm. To all outward appearances it had not been tampered with. Another task remained to be done. Diving into his desk he fished out a stout envelope of "legal size," in which he enclosed McNeal's precious manuscript. This he addressed as plainly as possible to the "City Editor, *Chronicle*, Philadelphia, Pa."

This envelope, containing the manuscript and made ready for mailing, he tucked into an inside pocket. The other envelope, filled with the bundle of blank paper, he carried outside to be called for by Oswald Perkins.

"That's what I call high art," he beamingly soliloquized. "Perkins takes this gay deception of mine home with him to open it and see what he's stole. And he draws a blank. But he can't suspect me of nothin'. Of course not. He'll think my side-partner has put up another job on him. Poor deluded Oswald! And as soon as the coast is clear I'll just step over to the post-office and mail this chunk of literature that's reposin' in my pocket."

When Mr. Perkins returned to the tavern he refused the landlord's invitation to "have one on the house," and explained:

"I must get right home and do some work. Where's that story of mine? I guess I'll read it over again before I mail it. I've got some more news to put to it. This'll make 'em sit up, Henry."

"It looks as if it might, Oswald," dryly rejoined the landlord. "You are an industrious cuss, ain't you? Don't forget to let me see it when it comes out in your Philadelphia newspaper, will you?"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE IRATE SPIDER-FARMER.

It was a heart-sick youth that waited in the swamp for George to return. Anchored by his damaged ankle he stormed at the patient wild man as

midnight came, passed, and brought no George. The long night merged into morning without tidings, and McNeal was sure that some mishap had befallen his story. It was small consolation that the ministrations of Jabez Habakkuk were so swiftly healing his hurt that another day's rest might enable him to travel after a fashion.

Noon found in him a frenzy as he raged: "Why did I trust that fool nigger? He'd have been back long ago if he hadn't been gobbled up, story and all."

A mellow voice from the near-by swamp hailed him with chiding intonation: "Here's your fool nigger, boss. He was gobbled up sure 'nough, but he done just now ungobbled hisself. Mornin', wild man."

As George plumped into view the cripple roared at him: "Where's my story?"

"She's a-rollin' to Philadelphia by now, boss. She an' me had our tribulations, but they couldn't lose us. They toted me to the calaboose with it and tuck it from me, an' I beat my haid agin' th' bars an' cried unto the Lawd in my miseries. But this mornin' Mister Henry Hooper come an' told me to hush my fuss, the big bundle of words was in th' pos'-office, an' not to pester him with no questions at all. Then he puts up bail for me, a hundred real dollars, boss, so I could come a-runnin' to tell you 'bout it. Lemme ketch my breath an' I'll impart to you what happened to George Alexander Brown."

Although George's tale was verbose it threw no light whatever upon the intervention of the Birchtown landlord, and the narrator had to conclude with: "Mr. Henry Hooper sure does move in mysterious ways his wonders to perform. An' Satan hisself couldn't be no slicker."

When McNeal was able to leave the swamp he established a line of communication by means of a post-office address at Holly Corners, where George agreed to call for letters sent to him. The reporter parted from his loyal comrades in the pasture where he had been rash enough to challenge the

speed of Jabez Habakkuk Botts, champion sprinter and distance-runner of South Jersey.

Limping slowly along the highway the sentimental pilgrim came at length to the little white schoolhouse, and sighed at sight of its shuttered windows. His reveries were bright with anticipation, however, and he pressed on to the outskirts of Holly Corners village. There by a stroke of good fortune he descried in a door-yard one of the matrons whose halting progress in the carryall had enabled him to hear mention of Hilda Kent and her school. Accosting this voluble dame he went straight to the heart of the matter:

"Beg pardon, but can you tell me where Miss Kent the school-teacher lives? I mean, where is her home? I understand that she is there at present."

The mother of Freddie and Ruby looked hard and long at the youth, and answered with unexpected vehemence:

"I suspect you're the man that's been loafin' around here with her. The children mistook you for the wild man, didn't they? Oh, I've just been hearing some things that have changed my opinions about a certain young woman. I never heard tell of such scandalous goin's on. It's the talk of the village, an unprotected young slip of a girl makin' friends with a suspicious character right in front of her innocent scholars. From what I hear she's got lots to explain to the school board when she gets back."

The bombardment was staggering. McNeal could make only a feeble return: "I may have been unfortunate, madam, but with half a chance I can convince you that I am respectable. And it's outrageous to speak this way of Miss Kent. Do you object to telling where she's gone?"

"She lives at Delaware Ferry, wherever that is. I know that from the wonian she's boarded with," snapped the other as if eager to be rid of him. "And you'd better take word to her that if she don't mend her ways she'd better stay at Delaware Ferry."

Fairly smothered by the fire of the

enemy, McNeal beat a retreat and sought the railroad-station. In an agony of remorse he realized that between Habakkuk Botts and himself Hilda Kent had been done a cruel wrong. What atonement could he make? He would confess himself the base wretch that he was, and accept her condemnation like a man. Alas, Delaware Ferry was several hours distant by rail, and several years of self-torment they seemed to be to this prospective martyr who was enfolded in black depression. What right had he even to think that she wanted to see him again? Bah, he was no better than Oswald Perkins.

Such introspections were diverted toward the end of the journey, for the train was winding along the bank of the Delaware through a landscape of wild and uncommon beauty.

"What a range for Jabez," thought the traveler. "He was complaining of the cockle-burrs and mosquitos in South Jersey. Up here he could live in the hills."

A canal also followed the course of the valley, its long levels gleaming through the trees. The tiny cottages beside the locks, the slow-trailing barges, and the quaint wooden bridges had an atmosphere of old-world peace and homeliness. The farmhouses wore an ancient aspect, as if generations of yeomanry had prospered beneath their ample roof-trees.

These impressions of the region into which he was blindly heading served to cheer the despondent youth, and he was glad when Delaware Ferry drew near. Limping from the station into a shady, sleepy village street he found his way to the livery-stable.

"Bartholomew Kent lives two miles down the valley. You can't miss the road," answered the owner of the stable. "Want me to hitch up a rig? All right, in a jiffy. Sit down and ease your game leg. Looks like you'd throwed a splint. Ever try Maud S. Liniment? Best in the world for man or beast, sprains or spavins. Rub some on out of my bottle while you're waiting. Do you good."

There was no evading such kindness, and McNeal bathed his ankle with horse-liniment which blistered where it touched. As he climbed into the buggy the warm-hearted liveryman observed:

"If you ain't acquainted with Bartholomew Kent, my advice is to go at him easy, as if you was trying to get the breechin' on a fractious hoss. He's as cranky as they make 'em, and he ain't any too polite to strangers. I like your face and I'll give you another tip. Your best chance to get next to him is to open up a line of conversation about spiders. He dotes on 'em. Good luck to you."

"Spiders! Great Scott, what next?" lamented McNeal as he steered his steed into the village road. "Birchtown was a hornet's nest, but *spiders*! Here is where I throw up my hands. I wonder if *she* dotes on them. Impossible!"

A new terror harassed him. He had not ventured hitherto to discuss spiders with an evil-tempered parent. But it were a poor lover, indeed, who would stop to count the odds, and this impetuous suitor only drove the faster. Guided by the liveryman's description of the farm of Bartholomew Kent, he turned into a long lane that led to the river, and soon glimpsed the weather-beaten dwelling flanked by several barns and sheds. This he knew to be his journey's end, so he let the horse slacken its pace, while he eagerly gazed down the lane and across the harvested meadow-land.

A heavy gate crossed the lane before it turned into the farmhouse yard, and McNeal climbed from the buggy to swing the barrier to one side. While he was busy with the fastenings, the sound of light footsteps and a swish of skirts made him glance up with a cry of surprised delight. Hilda was running toward him from the direction of the house. Entranced as he was by the sight of her, McNeal perceived that she was agitated by emotions not wholly inspired of gladness in his coming. That she was glad her frank eyes told him, and her voice fluttered a little; but she could not hide a dismay that was even more perturbing.

"I knew we would see each other again," she cried as she gave him her hand. "But why didn't you wait until I came back to school? I don't mean to be rude when you have come so far, but—but——"

She looked away with such distress in her face that McNeal blurted: "If it's as bad as that I'll go back at once. I—I thought you liked me—a little. I seem to be making a general mess of things, don't I?"

They were talking across the gate, her chin being pressed against the topmost bar. McNeal hobbled to the horse's head and made as if to turn the buggy around. She was quick to notice that he walked with difficulty, and tugging at the fastenings of the gate she exclaimed:

"And you have been really hurt, and you are very lame. And I act as if I were driving you away. Oh dear, it must have been in a hand-to-hand struggle with the wild man. Why would you be so rash? Come inside and sit down on the stone-wall, where you can be comfortable. Come at once, I say."

She stamped her foot and pulled back the gate with an air of peremptory command. McNeal meekly limped after her and she seated herself beside him on the low stone-wall. Resting her chin in her hand she looked up at him from under her tip-tilted straw hat, and began to explain with a rueful smile:

"Father has gone fishing, but he will be coming home for supper before very long. And I am afraid you must go back to town before he finds you here with me. It will be very difficult to make it all clear to you—about my father. But I must try, for I don't want you to think that I am sorry you came."

"Is it something about spiders?" gloomily ventured McNeal. "You can't drive me far away, Hilda. I intend to camp in this valley until I know—until you tell me—whether—oh, you must have guessed it by this time. I knew it the first day—there at the school-house pump, and——"

The girl did not appear displeased.

In fact, she was drinking in his every word with parted lips, and a lovely color that came and fled and came again. Nor was her reply any less ingenuous as she bravely lifted her eyes to lock glances with his.

"I should like to hear you talk like that, oh, for ever so long," said she, "even though I am not quite sure that you mean a word of it. But there are some things which I must tell you now while we have the chance, for father does not go fishing often."

She spoke rapidly, frequently looking over her shoulder as if fearing interruption while she went on:

"You have mentioned spiders. I suppose something was said to you in the village. My father is a very original and eccentric man. For many years he has been the only spider-farmer in the world, and he thinks of almost nothing else. Our home is known as the Spider Farm in this region, and people think father is more or less crazy."

"Would you mind telling me what he does with them? Why is it a spider-farm?" implored McNeal, surprised at his own calmness. "It makes me feel a bit dippy so far, I must confess, but I am getting used to the society of very astonishing persons."

With serious mien Hilda Kent resumed, as if it were her duty to disclose these facts: "For a number of years he made a comfortable income from selling spiders, thousands at a time, to wine merchants and the *nouveaux riches*, and such people as wished to have old wine-cellar without waiting years and years to have them become all cobwebby. The spiders were distributed in the bins and vaults, you see, and new, shiny rows of bottles were made to look a century old in a few months by father's industrious spiders. Of course the value of the cellars was greatly increased by these layers of cobwebs, and father was able to get fine prices for his spiders. I can recall his very words as he used to talk to me when I was a child: 'Cobwebs spun from cork to cork, cobwebs that drape the slender necks of flagon, bottle and flask with delicate lace and filmy fes-

toons, this is the seal of years of slow, mellowing fruition.'"

The attentive listener could not help speaking his thoughts aloud at this point in Hilda's story. "But do you think it was quite square? I mean, wasn't there an intent to delude whoever sampled the booze—inspected the wine-cellar, I should say? I don't mean to cast aspersions on your father's business, but I don't quite understand this feature of it."

Hilda was hurt and she showed it. "Father is the soul of honor," she cried reprovingly. "Why, he has taught me to hide nothing from him. I could not bring myself to deceive him in any way. I'll confess that the spider business *has* puzzled me. Father won't listen to me, however, and I am sure his conscience must be clear, or he would not have sold so many spiders."

"It was unjust of me to think of it," protested Billy. "Let us blame the spiders. The little brutes really put up the job, don't they? Please forgive me and go on with the story. I am dying to hear where you and I come into it, Hilda."

"Well, I must hurry along with it," said she. "I can't blame you for being puzzled and impatient. Father shipped vast numbers of his spiders abroad, mostly to France, England, and Germany, where wines and vintages are more highly prized than in this country, although he had many customers among the millionaires of such places as Chicago and New York."

"I'm sure the spider-farm would have continued to keep us in comfort had not my father become infatuated with another idea for making use of spiders. For years he had selected and bred the kinds of spiders which spun the strongest and most abundant webs, and he somehow got it into his head that this product might be employed in spinning and weaving a fabric finer and lovelier than silk. Little by little he neglected the business of shipping spiders for wine-cellar, and became absorbed in inventing reels, looms and so on, which he hoped might handle this spider-silk. He has woven me the most wonderful

handkerchiefs you ever saw, but the process is so slow and costly that he can't make it profitable. And as he is as stubborn as he is original, he is wearing himself out, spoiling his temper, and going bankrupt over his spiders."

"Poor old chap. Have you tried to help him?" asked McNeal with much sympathy.

"Yes, I did try to keep up the export end of the spider business," she answered with a sigh. "But I don't like spiders; and at last, when father's income had dwindled fearfully I decided to teach school. There were no vacancies around here, which is why I happened to go to Holly Corners. But you are wondering, aren't you, what in the world the spider-farm has to do with you. Well, father has become embittered and morbid, living with his spiders and his disappointments, and I could never fill my mother's place in his life. He dislikes having strangers come here, for he is afraid they will try to steal his spider inventions. And he is specially hostile against reporters. In fact, he simply raves about them. A long time ago he allowed a New York reporter to visit the spider-farm and write it up. The article treated the farm as a huge joke, and father as a most entertaining lunatic; and he has never got over it."

"But need he know that I am a reporter?" hopefully suggested the youth. "I've passed for a whisky-drummer and a naturalist all in the same week."

"No, I cannot bring myself to deceive him, ever," she replied sadly. "And I have already told him about my adventure with the wild man and your heroic part in it."

"But didn't that soften his heart toward me, Hilda?"

"No-o, it didn't," was her reluctant admission. "I am always frank and I must tell you, I suppose, that it had quite the opposite effect upon him. He grew red in the face and flew into a rage, and declared it would be just like a reporter to arrange the rescue all beforehand so that he could make a good impression on the girl. Of course I know how unfair that was, but there

was no use trying to argue with him. He stamped out and locked himself in the spider-nursery all the afternoon."

The random shot went home with such deadly effect that the victim bent over and rubbed his lame ankle to hide the flush of guilt that o'erspread his candid countenance. His disinclination to meet this vindictive parent had become a positive dread.

"So I can't come to your house at all, Hilda?" he entreated. "Can't we win him over, somehow? Upon my word, this is simply awful. Won't you let me meet you down by the canal or somewhere else? I won't be driven away. I'll haunt you."

"No, it wouldn't be square and right, B-Billy." Her lip quivered. "Perhaps I shall be going back to school next week, unless father needs me here. His health is so wretched and his affairs are in such a dreadful tangle that I don't know what is best for me to do. I am very glad that I had the chance to come home for these few days, anyhow."

"I don't believe you really want to see me," cried Billy McNeal tempestuously. "If you did, you wouldn't let an unreasonable old spider-farmer come between us, although he is your father. Even if I am a reporter I am a human being, and——"

So absorbed were they in each other that they had wholly failed to detect the approach of the spider-farmer himself, who had crossed the meadow by a foot-path from the river-bank, and was mounting the stone-wall within ear-shot of McNeal's gusty outburst. Dropping his pole and basket of fish, Bartholomew Kent made a rapid advance and suddenly appeared from behind a clump of trees. McNeal stared wildly at the angry parent whose morose lineaments were fairly livid as he shouted:

"An unreasonable old spider-farmer, am I? And you're a reporter! I heard you say so. No, I don't consider you a human being. Your miserable carcass is trespassing upon my land, sir. Remove it at once, before I lose my temper. Is this your bogus hero, Hilda? What is he doing here? Answer me."

The parent had clenched his fists and

was swinging them nearer and nearer the noxious intruder with each superheated sentence. Hilda tried to find words. Tears welled to her eyes and she struggled to hold back a sob of fright and humiliation. Her grief was so eloquent that McNeal choked down his bellicose retort and backed sullenly beyond the gate. There he waited for

some farewell word or sign from Hilda. The spider-farmer laid his hand on her arm as if to lead her indoors, but she brushed him aside and tried to smile at Billy McNeal. Then with incredible bravery she raised trembling fingers to her lips and blew a kiss across the bars to her stricken lover, who audaciously wafted another back over the gate.

TO BE CONTINUED.



TRICKS OF THE STEEL TRADE

IT might very naturally have been thought that if there was one trade which could be said to be free from trickery and faking, it was that of steel manufacture. The mere fact that steel is synonymous with strength would seem to bear out this view. And yet methods are sometimes adopted in the making of steel which once again illustrate the saying that there are tricks in every trade.

At the same time, it must be admitted that some of these tricks, when carried out, do not necessarily mean a lessening in the soundness and quality of the material. For instance, it sometimes happens that in casting a piece of steel, what is known as a "blow-hole" occurs. Often this is not noticed until the steel has been cut and trimmed for the required purpose. In such a case the hole is usually "tapped" and a well-fitting screw inserted, the head of the latter being filed off so closely to the metal that it needs an expert eye to detect any unusual feature. This is a trick which makes no difference to the strength of the metal, and consequently is quite harmless.

Sometimes, however, a crack appears in a piece of metal which it is impossible to remedy by the usual expedients of hammering and rolling. The careful manufacturer will put the piece on one side and make a fresh casting; for if such a piece of metal were used as a crank-shaft, for instance, it might split at a time of extra strain, and so bring untold disaster.

On the other hand, the manufacturer may decide that he cannot afford to throw the faulty casting on one side, and in order to cover the defect it is put in the open air to rust. The weather will probably be found to have filled the crack by the time the casting is required, and no one outside the foundry will have known of its existence until, perhaps, it causes a vessel to become disabled. And as it is almost impossible to tell afterward how the crack originated, the maker is quite secure from blame.

One of the most sensational scandals which have agitated the engineering world for some years past came to light not long ago, in connection with the building of a great battle-ship. After a trial trip she was found to be somewhat leaky, and an examination of some of the plates forming the side of the vessel revealed the startling fact that the rivets had been put in the holes cold and simply calked.

When a ship's plates are riveted together, it is usual not only, of course, to drive the rivets in red-hot, but also to calk them over with a special composition as an extra precaution against leakage. In the case mentioned the builder was working under contract, and in order to save time resorted to the trick described. The result was that the strain on the plates quickly loosened the calking, and some of the rivets actually dropped out of the holes.

Lisping Jimmie and the Leak

By W. B. M. Ferguson

Author of "The Freebooter," "Where the Trails Crossed," Etc.

Just as one of the essentials of a secret society is to be secret, so on Wall Street one's plans, in order to come to a successful issue, must be kept concealed from one's enemies. The leakage dealt with in this interesting story was of a most enigmatical sort.



THE leak had been dripping for over a fortnight before the Pinkertons were called in, and Jimmie Blunt, head plumber, given the detail. That was before he was with the Central Office, and his workmanlike soldering in this case, wiping every joint with neatness and despatch, was what turned Mulberry Street's spectacles his way.

When he went up to see old Harmon at his Madison Avenue house the butler called him "sir" on the first pass, and took him for a week-end guest. When the financier saw him he said he hadn't any time to bother with insurance-agents, but when Jimmie unbuttoned his lip and twiddled his cane, blinking vacantly behind his glasses the while, the Wall Street dollar-sign looked round for a club or some handy weapon. And when Jimmie hinted apologetically that he was the Pinkertons' star man, old Harmon gasped and rang for brandy and soda. When the atmosphere had cleared Blunt placidly listened to the details.

"I've had two detective-agencies on the case already," threatened old Harmon, eying Jimmie as if he would like to ask what kind of a plush box he came in. "They both fell down. Only for the press I would call in the Central Office. It's no case for boyish amateurs," he rasped, with a glance at Jim-

mie's bland, ingenuous face. "There's a leak, and it must be stopped at once. Already we've lost more than I'd care to tell you. Every move we make is learned and counted upon by our enemies. And let me tell you, my boy, that the Street can be as murderous as a rattlesnake."

"In a big conthern it would be very eathy for one to play traitor," commented Blunt. "Have you any idea who it could be?"

"If I had, sir," said Harmon pointedly, "I wouldn't be talking to you. You don't seem to grasp the situation. If it was a case where days could be consumed in the dissemination of the knowledge stolen from us, it would be only a matter of time to weed out the culprit. But such information as we deal in must be acted upon *instantly*. Otherwise it would be useless. Time and again we have proven by the market that our plans have been in the hands of our enemies within a few minutes after being determined upon. Yes, sir, within a few minutes!"

"Oh," said Jimmie. "Within a few minuteth? Then the besth method of prothedure would be to thadow every employee who leavth the offith."

"And hasn't that been done?" asked the other sarcastically. "And what the devil use would it be to them to leave the office?"

"They might uth a phone," suggested Jimmie meekly, sucking his cane.

"Mr. Graves, my partner, suggested that two weeks ago," replied Mr. Harmon with infinite patience. "Every wire has been followed out of the office. There are none but the legitimate ones. I say every employee has been shadowed; not one leaves but I can explain every moment of his time. Besides, there are but four people who know the inside workings of the firm—my partner, two private secretaries and myself."

"Then, by the proceth of elimination," said Jimmie cheerfully, fixing a vacant eye on the ceiling, "but two could make uth of it—the two private thecretaries."

"They are absolutely honest—I give them no opportunity to be otherwise," said Harmon grimly. "Naturally, being the obvious focusing-point of suspicion, they are under the closest scrutiny all the time."

"Ith a very nithe cathe," mused Blunt. "I'll think it over."

"Think it over!" roared Harmon. "And am I to drop thousands while your brain is getting up steam? And you are the best man the Pinkertons have!"

"Tho it theems," commented Jimmie mildly. "But perhapth I may akth *you* for a pothion. I know telegraphy, thenography, typewriting. But I think I'll go to the other offithes firtht. Good evening."

When he had gone, ushered out by the butler in speechless admiration of the vacant eyes and aristocratically dumb poise, Mr. Harmon swore, then laughed and called the Pinkertons on the wire.

"Is that thing you sent here a detective or some weird mechanical toy?" he asked shortly. "I told you I wanted a *man*—a good one. What? He's the best you've got? O Lord! Well, I'll give him just twenty-four hours to make good. That's all. Not a second more. I'm not in the kindergarten line. I wouldn't give Mr. Blunt *any* chance, only I know the reputation of your firm. But let me tell you, you've made a mistake this time. That young man should be in an old woman's home. Yes, sir. He's the most insufferably vacant

thing I've ever met. What? Oh, very well. I only hope you're right. If he *does* make good— Well, I'll have something to say to him on the side."

As for the "insufferably vacant thing," he was over in Pabst's drinking a solitary stein of beer, twiddling his cane and staring at nothing in particular. That was Jimmie's manner of thinking. The problem was: Given a roomful of people, the searching eye of scrutiny ever upon them, how could one communicate to any outside party, so that the information could be used instantly, without being detected? The obvious focusing-point of suspicion was the two secretaries; but Jimmie, old in the ways and means of crime, knew enough to beware of the obvious. He was still vacantly eying his Pilsener and twiddling the cane when the bar closed.

The following morning saw a young college graduate hunting work in the Woodbridge Building. He didn't look as if he had been up very late the night previous. The stock exchange firm of Harmon & Graves was on the tenth floor. Those occupying the suites right and left were first visited by Blunt. He was a very earnest and ambitious young man, despite his lisp, and he took a flattering interest in his surroundings.

His many accomplishments were listened to. But there were no vacancies, and he was told that he would be remembered when one occurred. Jimmie thanked them with boyish faith and ascended to the next floor. Here he met with the same reception. But in one office he had a mild adventure. The ground-glass door bore the legend:

ADRIAN C. BLACK

ATTORNEY AT LAW

It did not look very inviting, but Jimmie, scorning nothing, however lowly, like all ambitious young men looking for a start in the world, turned the handle and went in.

A yellow-haired girl, seated at a typewriter by the window, swiftly and dexterously shoved a novel she had been reading into a convenient drawer and

bent assiduously over her note-book. Then looking up and seeing Jimmie instead of her employer, she shoved her pencil through her hair, glanced in a near-by mirror, renewed the cud of gum, placed her hands on her immature hips and said belligerently: "Well?" It was more like a challenge than a query. Jimmie showed his milk-white teeth. "I would like to see Mr. Black, pleath."

"Can't. Outerlunch. Whoshilisay-called?"

"Oh, I was merely looking for employment," apologized Blunt.

She scrutinized him leisurely from this new view-point, decided that she liked his smile, and from her own lofty mercantile position took pity upon his necessity. She commenced to chat. Mutual appreciation of the delicate delights of Sulzer's Park, North Beach and Dreamland put them on a sympathetic footing; and the girl, seeing in embryo the vision of a college-bred "steady" flaunting before the eyes of her chums, offered to help him find a place.

"There's nothin' doin' in this chapel," she confided, "but I'll speak to Mr. Black, and if you can slug a typewriter mebbe he'll fix you."

"You theem very buthy yourthelf," ventured Blunt, openly admiring the yellow hair with childlike intensity. "I thaw you reading Laura Jean Libbey. She's great, ithn't she?"

"Oh, it's a cinch here," confided the girl, patting her marceled hair. "I drag down ten per for looking pretty. Like my looks? Nothin' to do but type cheesy old law stuff."

"Tho I thee," commented the other, turning over a sheaf of papers on the table. "I thuppo Mr. Black is very busy. Out all the time?"

"He's only here from twelve to one—when I go out to feed. And then he comes in at five when I knock off," said the girl, trying her most effective glance.

Jimmie, followed by the typewriter, sauntered idly into the next room. This was the lawyer's private office. "Quite ideal surroundings," he murmured, scratching his head. "Tho peathful and quiet, you know. I thudied for the law

onceth upon a time. What is Mr. Black's line?"

"Don't know," she shrugged, admiring Jimmie's straight legs as viewed from the rear. "Every morning I get a raft of stuff to type, and when he comes in he looks it over and gives me another bunch."

"I underthand," nodded Blunt sagely. "And no clients come to thee him? And you don't even have any letters to write? How nithe. It would just thuit me. Well, I'll float around again when Mr. Black happens to be in. From twelve to one, you thay? Thank you tho much." And with another admiring glance at the yellow hair, he idled out.

Half past twelve found the ambitious young man once more at Mr. Black's door. He was in such a hurry that he forgot to knock and to tread heavily. The lawyer's first intimation of another's presence was in seeing Jimmie standing blandly in the doorway of the connecting room. Mr. Black hung up the telephone-receiver with a jerk, and swung around in his revolving-chair. But Jimmie's quick ears had caught the end of the message. It consisted of but two words: "American crook."

"Oh, he's a criminal lawyer," said Blunt to himself, and then asked for a position. The reply was terse and to the point.

"No," said Mr. Black. "And, young man, you might learn to knock before entering a gentleman's private office. It will save you some unpleasant experiences."

"There wath nothing to knock on—the connecting door wath open," apologized Jimmie meekly, and sauntered out. In the hall his listless manner vanished, and he made a bee-line for the public telephone-booth, his cane tap-tapping on the floor. He found Mr. Black's number and called Central.

"Hello. Thith is two-two-o-two Dey. Yes. Will you kindly give me that number again, pleath. Yeth, I had 'em on the wire a minute ago. Seven-six-four John? Yeth, that's it!" The wires buzzed and a fitful medley of hysterical sounds tumbled out of the re-

ceiver. Then it drew taut and a man's voice called "Hello."

"Hello," said Jimmie sweetly. "Eight-four-two Dey? No? Oh, I'm sorry. Wrong number. Ring off, pleathe." He waited a minute and again took down the receiver.

"Hello. Give me Information, pleathe. Hello. I want a party who is with a firm the name of which I can't remember. But their phone number ith seven-six-four John. Can you get it for me? Yeth. Seven-six-four John. Hello. What? Boynge & Johnson, twenty-five Broad Street? Thanks awfully. Much obliged."

Humming, Jimmie sought a *Herald* and a chop-house. He leisurely turned to the back page, where the market reports are listed. "American crook," he murmured, running his finger down the list of stocks. "American crook," he murmured, vacantly sipping his beer. Finally the finger halted toward the end of the column, and Jimmie slowly straightened up and meditatively scratched his head.

He sauntered over to twenty-five Broad Street, and easily fell into conversation with the elevator-starter. He stayed there an hour, his seemingly vacant eyes noting everything and every one. Then he headed west for Broadway and Bradstreet's. The manager had covered the financial quarter when he and Jimmie were on the *Sun* together. Blunt asked various questions, and scratched his head when he got the answers.

He wound up the day at Harmon & Graves. The office-boy flippantly barred the way with the usual lie, but Jimmie patted him on the head and told him to run along with his card before he got cold. "I'm going to help you run things here, son," he confided, "tho be nithe. Be nithe." And the boy went. Mr. Harmon saw Blunt alone in his private office.

"Well, have you done anything?" he asked shortly. "I told your people last night that I would give you just twenty-four hours. Half the time has gone, and you haven't even taken hold of things."

"Make it another twenty-four," suggested Jimmie placidly, "and I'll give you a nithe show-down." He commenced to suck his cane. Harmon scowled at him and then finally laughed. It was impossible to look at Jimmie and not laugh.

"You're a joke—an expensive joke," he grumbled. "Haven't you done anything at all but suck that stick since I saw you last?"

Jimmie nodded. "Had you a deal on in United States steel?" he asked quietly.

Harmon compressed his lips, his eyes flickering. "Yes—how did you know?" he asked slowly.

"Then," hummed Jimmie, "go blind for a minute and let it alone."

The other was suddenly quiet. "Is that straight?" he asked harshly. "Do you mean we've leaked again?"

"I do," said Blunt calmly. "Your friends have been tipped off. You want to do just the oppohtite of what you planned."

"Why, hell, man," exploded Harmon, jumping to his feet and pacing the floor, "we only decided on that pool this morning. No one has left this office. Not a soul, I tell you. Not a message could get over the wire; not even by Mr. Graves or myself. One of us would have heard. What is it—spirits?"

"I don't know," sighed Jimmie, sniffing, "but give me a pothition here and I'll find out."

"Take any you like," snapped the other. "I'll discharge those secretaries and see if that will stop this leak. I'll discharge every one in my employment. I'll stop this if I have to fire the entire staff!"

"Don't," advised Jimmie calmly, "If they are guilty they'll be out of our reach. Let 'em stay. Ith worth any money to find out how they work the game. Ith the cleverest I've ever stacked up against. And pleathe don't say I'm from the Pinkertons—not to a soul."

He had his way and joined the office early the following morning. Harmon called him aside for a moment, saying gravely:

"You were quite right about that steel-pool leakage. I've called it off. I'll give you all the time you want—only nail them."

For one of his caliber this was an admission of faith, and Jimmie appreciated it. His duties were assisting the private secretaries, and he watched the office like a hawk. It took him but a minute to verify Mr. Harmon's statement regarding legitimate wires and the system of surveillance in vogue. There could be absolutely no communication with an outside confederate. So far he had discovered the identity of that ally, and he was almost certain of the prime mover in the scheme. But he was still hunting a motive and the method of procedure. He realized that he was opposed to a very able brain—one as dexterous and ingenious as his own. It was a clever person who could boldly hoodwink Harmon & Graves before their very eyes; one more clever who could outwit Jimmie Blunt. It was not very long before he had won the confidence and liking of every one in the office, even including Mr. Graves. In fact, the silent young junior partner took rather a fancy to Jimmie's lisp and boyish, engaging manner.

"You've got a find in that young Blunt," he said to Harmon. "He's the kind that gets there. Not by right of their mentality, for he hasn't much, but one does things for them because they are so cheerful and obliging. How about this leakage business?" he added quietly. "Are you going to let me call in the Central Office?"

Harmon longed to confess the true identity and age of the pleasant young man with no brains, but he had given his word and so remained silent.

"The Central Office means the press," he said, "and we can't afford that. I don't want our private affairs scattered over the Street. If the leakage continues I'll call in another private agency and——"

"They're no good," interrupted Graves shortly.

"Then I'll look after the matter myself," returned Harmon with quiet finality.

Beverley Graves shrugged and turned to his typewriter. He owned considerably less years than Harmon and, charged with the electric mentality of the age, was galled at times at the other's somewhat old-fashioned and conservative business-methods. There had been times when they had come to a deadlock over some campaign; when the younger man advocated some scheme which the other's hard-earned experience considered unsafe. But on the whole they made a capable team—one which the Street had learned to reckon with. Meanwhile Jimmie had not, despite his other cares, neglected Miss Branigan of the yellow hair, who dragged down ten per in the room above. He always managed to take time out to have a chat with her. And always he idled into the adjoining room, hoping to find some sign that would place him on the right track—hoping and failing. For, with the exception of that initial message he had overheard, there was nothing to arouse the slightest suspicion. Not an iota of evidence; not even a scrap of paper. And there was absolutely no means of communication with the rooms below. The case looked as dark as ever. He could prove nothing.

A day passed, two days, three days, and the leakage had presumably stopped. Harmon was in high glee. "We've frightened them off, my boy. Just in time, for we have a big deal on." Jimmie shrugged and said nothing. He had been very quiet during those past few days. He was up a tree and hated to acknowledge it.

The noon-hour of the fourth day came with him still up the tree. He was sitting at his desk idly figuring how to get down. The office was quiet, the staff being out to lunch. In the adjoining room were the two partners. He could hear the drone of their voices. Jimmie at length yawned, and went up to see Miss Branigan. Of course she was not there, but Blunt tiptoed in and took her chair by the window. The door of the connecting room was closed; Mr. Black was in there. Again Jimmie yawned, waiting, every faculty on the

alert; every nerve tingling; waiting—for he knew not what.

A minute passed; another and another. Then suddenly it came! Jimmie, with pulsing heart, caught himself reading it before he was conscious of what it all meant. He knew he had been reading it from the start, picking out each letter mechanically. It was repeated twice. It could be heard distinctly, unmistakably by a trained ear. But only for that repetition he would have passed it by unheeding; only for the fact that his every faculty was expecting—anything. The message had come by wireless. Mechanically Jimmie's pencil was out in a trice and he was transcribing it on his cuff. It consisted of but three words:

By bonded policeman.

That meant nothing and Blunt carefully went over each letter as he heard it. The spelling was correct. Pondering, he produced the list of stocks he had clipped from the *Herald*, and ran a finger down the column. Then he scratched his head and, humming softly, tiptoed out. He had found the lost equation.

In the corridor he collided with Miss Branigan as she stepped from the elevator.

"I'm sorry I wasn't in," she said coyly. "When are you going to keep that date at Sulzer's? I've a gentleman friend who's just dyin' to take me if you don't."

"Well, I wouldn't let him die—I'm not worth it—really," said Jimmie absently. "But I say, Miss Branigan," he added with much sincerity, forgetting to lisp, "you've helped me get a position and I'll help you get one."

"My, but you're ikey," she said. "I guess I can hold down the one I've got, thank you. I don't want a position."

"But you *will*," he said quietly. "And I'll get you one where what you drag down won't be for merely looking pretty. A figurehead doesn't make much success or progress in business—and no one likes to earn fool money. Come down and see Mr. Harmon to-morrow

and you'll have a real position. Don't forget now." And he left her in a maze of adjectives and interrogation-points. Then he went to the public telephone-booth and called up Boynge & Johnson.

Five o'clock came and found Jimmie still yawning at his desk. But now there was a steely point of light flickering in the depths of his gray eyes, and the knuckles showed white on his tense hands. Again he was waiting—waiting for the wireless. Perhaps it might not come until the noon-hour to-morrow. Perhaps—There it was now! It took him back over the trail of years to midnight hours spent in sweating labor. Letter by letter he picked it up unerringly. He listened intently for a minute and then, still yawning, sauntered into the adjoining room.

Old Harmon was seated at his desk smoking and placidly eying the ceiling. In a corner sat Beverley Graves with his back to him.

"Well, Blunt?" said Harmon, shifting his gaze and crossing his legs. "Work over?"

"No," said Jimmie meekly. "My machine won't do heavy manifolding. Have you one that can?"

"There's Mr. Graves' old one," said Harmon, a twinkle in his eye.

"It's a beauty. Sounds like a steam-roller with the measles."

Graves swung around in his revolving-chair, smiling.

"You can't forgive a man for being ambitious and progressive," he remonstrated, clipping a cigar. "I tell you every man, however well off, should know a trade or profession. Why, even Prince Louis of Battenberg is a watch-maker. You never know when you may have to fall back upon it. Don't you agree with me, Mr. Blunt?"

"Quite," said Jimmie, looking at the machine. "I think you thet an excellent example, thir. Thome one thaid: 'Take care of the minutes and the hour will take care of ithelf.' I learned telegraphy at night after hourth. It comth in handy."

"Oh," said Graves, eying him steadily. "I merely practise on it at lunch-

time and after hours. Good night, Mr. Blunt."

"Good night, thir," said Jimmie, ignoring the hint, and still inspecting the typewriter. "I—I thay, Mr. Graves, don't you think it would be better if you used the regular hard-rubber cylinder?"

"Eh?" said the other blankly.

"This one is made of steel," said Jimmie.

"It's all the same, I suppose," said the other, blowing smoke. "I don't profess to know much about them."

"Steel carries the sound farther," persisted Blunt. "That machine of yours reminds me of a story, Mr. Graves. Have you time to listen?"

Old Harmon had slowly straightened up and was looking at each man through half-closed eyes.

"I mean," continued Jimmie, sitting on the end of the table and swinging one leg, while Mr. Graves eyed him coldly, biting at his lip, "about this leakage of information in your firm, Mr. Graves. I want to warn you against Messrs. Boynge & Johnson. You know them——"

"Pardon me, I don't," said Graves quietly. "And I don't wish to. They are our enemies, sir."

"Oh," exclaimed Jimmie softly. "That's funny. Bradstreet's manager, and he knows everything, said you were the silent partner and held controlling interest!"

Graves' face suddenly set and whitened dangerously.

"Careful there!" he warned harshly. "That's a damned lie! Who the devil are you to say——"

"I?" said Jimmie, bending forward and looking him steadily in the eyes. "I'm Pinkertons' man—and you're the man I want!"

Graves hastily pushed back his chair and half rose to his feet. Then he sank back, laughed and bit into another cigar.

"You're either insane or a fool—no doubt a little of both," he sneered. "Get out of this office before you're kicked out."

"Wait a minute," said Harmon quietly. His mouth looked like twisted

wire and the veins stood out on his hands. "Go on," he said, looking at Blunt.

"I don't think," said Jimmie quietly, "that either you or I are fools, Mr. Graves. I think the detector is as clever as the originator. You choose to lie so I'll show your hand. In the first place, you are back of Boygne & Johnson—that shark firm. You can deny afterward—if you can. Mr. Harmon's conservatism didn't harmonize with your wildcat instincts. Through him you were in possession of valuable information that had to be acted upon instantly. You acted upon it. When the leak was discovered you courted investigation, secure in your own cleverness. Under the detectives' noses, before Mr. Harmon, you still betrayed your firm.

"Now up-stairs, in the room directly overhead, there is a certain lawyer—Mr. Black. Know him? He is your tool. Don't lie to me!" he suddenly snapped. "I've been up against real criminals in my time; not pikers who are afraid of a risk. You took care not to see or communicate in any manner with Boynge & Johnson. Presumably you did not know Mr. Black. Yes, I know you never even spoke to him. He was always very busy with outside work and he kept a figurehead in shape of a typewriter girl to lend the proper atmosphere and authenticity. You provided for all contingencies. Black kept the girl busy. She copied 'Burdick on Torts' from cover to cover, and didn't know any better. She has more vanity than brains, and was satisfied to drag down ten per and consider herself busy.

"During the lunch-hour Black relieved her and again at five o'clock. Curiously enough, Mr. Graves, those were the periods in which you elected to practise on the typewriter. The building is quiet at that time. Of course sound ascends. An ordinary machine can be heard a great distance off—but one with a steel cylinder, like this one, can be heard infinitely better and, moreover, it makes a distinct metallic click peculiar, to itself. No one here knows telegraphy but myself—and you. You

are also an expert typist. Presumably practising, you used the Morse telegraphy-code. Mr. Black deciphered it, and immediately wired Boynge & Johnson. I read your message to-day. That click-clack-clack was to me as if you had spoken. You also used a private code in case any one should overhear Mr. Black on the wire. The other day you exposed the pool in United States Steel. To-day the message was, 'Buy Amalgamated Copper!' If this was a criminal case," he concluded simply, "Mulberry Street and not Mr. Harmon would be listening to this. But he's the doctor."

Graves had listened in paralyzed silence to Jimmie, as he unerringly unraveled every tangled thread in the complicated skein. He started to speak; then, as if realizing the futility of denial, covered his face with quivering hands.

Jimmie swung off the table, looking

at Mr. Harmon. "I've something more to say, sir. I took it on myself to phone Boynge & Johnson, in the name of Black, that I had made a mistake. I told them to sell Amalgamated, not buy. And—and there's a girl coming to see you to-morrow about a position. I will take it as a favor if you can find her one. She's had her lesson. And—well, there's a policeman waiting down-stairs for Messrs. Graves & Black—shall I tell him that it isn't necessary?"

Old Harmon arose, his eyes on Graves' bent head and heaving shoulders. "Yes," he said very slowly at length. "Please tell him it isn't necessary. I believe in the theory of another chance. Leave this to me. And," offering his hand, "may I see you again? You're a master plumber, my boy, and I told your firm, if you made good, I would have something to say to you on the side."

And eventually he said it.



INCONSISTENCIES OF APPELLATION

CALL a girl a chick and she smiles; call a woman a hen and she howls. Call a young woman a witch and she is pleased; call an old woman a witch and she is indignant. Call a girl a kitten and she rather likes it; call a woman a cat and she hates you. Women are queer.

If you call a man a gay dog it will flatter him; call him a pup, a hound, or a cur, and he will try to alter the map of your face. He doesn't mind being called a bull or a bear, yet he will object to being mentioned as a calf or a cub. Men are queer, too.



HOW COIN-SWEATERS WORK

CLOSELY allied to the making of counterfeit coins, and usually combined with that nefarious trade, is what is known as "sweating," which requires considerable skill to accomplish successfully. A rubber mold is used, into which a gold coin to be sweated is introduced, and held with a clip.

Copper wires having been adjusted, the coin is immersed in a bath of cyanide of potassium and an electric battery set going. The action of the electricity upon the coin in the acid uniformly "sweats" the metal—that is to say, causes so much of it to become detached. This process is gone through with a large number of coins, and the gold deposit thus obtained is extracted from the acid.

It is for the purpose of detecting the existence of such reduced coins that bankers weigh gold coins in a balance; and if one is light in the scale it will immediately be shown by the indicator. The "light" coin is then taken out, and, whatever the "shortage" represents, that amount the customer will have to make up.

The White Man's Gift

By K. and Hesketh Prichard

Authors of "The Fortunes of Geoff," "Don Q.," Etc.

A tale of stirring adventure on the Patagonian pampas.
Virgil's advice, to distrust those who bear gifts, might
have been profitably followed in this particular instance



TOWARD the western margin of the Patagonian pampas a hill stands up solitary in the gaunt sunset land. Thither in remote ages descended the Good Spirit, and sitting in a cave whose mouth was draped in a snow-cloud, he made animals such as the guanaco, guemal and cavy, which he gave to his people, the Tehuelches, for food. Whereupon, some say, the Gualichu, the Spirit of Evil, more easily moved to action than the sleepy Lord of Good, took up his dwelling in another cave upon the left hand, where he created the puma and the fox to harry and devour the good gifts bestowed upon the tribes.

So runs the legend of the far-off days. But in it the great and real enemy of this nomadic people has no place. He came long after. Many snows had fallen and many hunting-seasons passed over them before *he* rode out of the east with his troop of packhorses, having come down in a ship along the stormy coast, where the spume of the angry seas lies forever melting and forever is renewed.

Even the Gualichu, watching from a snow-peak above black forests of antarctic beech, was affrighted at the coming of this man, for he foresaw that soon he would be a god without a people, a mere abstraction, a vanished superstition. He knew he would one day be caught, imprisoned inside a book, and carried overseas—no more a god.

For the first time a thought, untainted by hostility to his tribes, entered into the dark heart of the slinking, formless spirit. He could look onward to the time when he should no longer lurk at night behind the *toldos*, groaning, till the men and women feared their own shadows. No longer would the dawn see the hunters rush forth, and leap upon their horses, galloping into the sunrise with howls to drive him away to his haunts in the mountains. Under the weight of this foreknowledge, the heart of Gualichu grew sad.

As for the Spirit of Good, he had so long been drowsing that he was become almost nameless among the people. He took no heed of the blue smoke that heralded the pale-faced rider, but merely turned in his age-long sleep.

So the rider came up out of the east, more perilous than a conquering army, more remorseless than an antarctic winter, though he sat down as a friend by the fires of the *toldos*.

Kayuke was a Tehuelche Indian, whose tribe roamed far from the little settlements that white men had begun to plant upon the eastern coast. He was born under a *califaté* bush beside the trail his forefathers had trodden through the centuries, following the game upon their migrations north and south on the pampas. The tribe were on the march, and an hour after his birth Kayuke was riding in his mother's arms toward the warmer north, for behind them the winter was closing down in heavy snowfalls.

Kayuke's father was made glad by the birth of the great brown boy. He was the *gownok*, the chief of his tribe, and his people were glad with him. Perhaps the only creature that grieved for the coming of the baby was Panzo, a small yellow dog that the father of Kayuke had adopted, Tehuelche fashion, as his son. Thus if an Indian were to say to the *gownok*, "Lend me a horse for the hunting," he would answer, "Go ask Panzo, he has ten horses and thirty mares." Panzo's reply probably tallied with the *gownok's* secret wish.

Panzo was petted and made much of, and even had a young *china* to look after his comfort, until the true heir, Kayuke, opened his eyes upon the light and claimed his own. Then the dog fell to the level of his kin, and knew soreness of heart.

The birth-ceremonies in Kayuke's honor became in after years a tradition: How the tribal wizard cut himself and bled from forehead and forearm, and how long the disemboweled horse lived and quivered after the child was placed in his warm body. Thus it was known beforehand how brave a heart Kayuke was destined to carry.

Before he was five he had ridden many hundreds of miles up and down the wild, treeless country. Before he was fifteen, he overtopped six feet, and was become a great hunter, and his father had given to him a *boleadores* weighted with copper balls, very ancient and cut round with a groove to take the thong. This was the third most important piece of property in the tribe, the first being a broken looking-glass gained in barter from a Chilean pioneer, and the second a cabin-lamp washed ashore from a wreck just south of where the Rio Deseado pours its volume of dark-hued waters into the Atlantic.

Those were very joyous years for Kayuke. Deep down in his heart he was extravagantly happy, though outwardly he wore a grave face, for he had learned the greatest of Tehuelche arts, to bear the aspect of silent, expressionless dignity.

Often in later days Kayuke used to look back to the morning of his life with uncomprehending pain. The golden and white guanacos racing with swinging necks across a scarp, or on the rim of black hills etched out slenderly against the sky; the spring of his horse under him as they flew in pursuit up and down the stony slopes; the unforgotten scent of burning *califaté* wood that met him when the *toldos* rose in sight, the meal roasted by the camp-fire—mingled through all these recollections the vague and glowing hopes of youth.

Kayuke had grown to be the first hunter of the tribe. He enjoyed life without recognizing the fountain of his joy, caring not why his heart was light in his great chest, why the struggle of the unbroken colt under him wrought up a frenzy of delight in his brain as he put forth his strength and skill to conquer.

In the midst of these pleasures there stole upon him an unaccustomed melancholy, remote yet infinite. He cared no longer for the twilight dance, when the young men with ostrich-feathers in their hair circled round the fires to the beating of drums. He longed to be alone, to roam apart like the animals he hunted. He had no clear thoughts perhaps, but he sought and desired the piercing sadness of the sunset land with its uncollected dreams.

Saying no word even to Tanlu, his chosen friend, Kayuke withdrew himself to a solitary spot, beside the mouth of a river that pours its waters into the great southern lake. For there were caves with paintings on the rock-faces, where a people, now forgotten, had made their dwellings in times long past. Kayuke and his tribe had of old feared to linger near these pictures, believing that the hand of the Gualichu had set them on the rock. And when night darkened the water, perchance they sprang from their places, living, strong-handed and terrible.

But with this new feeling hot in him, the young man lost the old fear. Of all things Kayuke most desired to be alone. The call to go away and brood a while

compelled him; he yielded to an instinct he could not name. Knowing that none would dare to follow him to the caves of the ancients, he went thither, and camped beside the river that rolls out of the southern mountains to lose itself in the blue lake upon whose surface day by day he sat and watched the icebergs drifting.

What he thought of during the long hours he could never have told, for the powerful untaught brain was dumb. He groped dimly after ideas that escaped him, a surcharge of feeling weighed on his spirit as he stood face to face with nature. Never in his after life did he hear the *pampero* whisper in the broad green flags, or see the crested grebe swim shyly upon the river-pools without remembering those days.

Nightly he would watch the sun sink from the zenith, as if dragged downward by some giant arm beneath the nameless tumult of the mountains, reddening with glory the untrodden peaks. "Ah," would cry the imagination of the solitary, "it is the camp-fire of the Gualichu that I see."

Kayuke lingered by the caves; he could not tear himself away from that enchanted isolation. Smoke signals from the camp of his tribe he disregarded. "For," said he, "my people love to gather themselves together, they fear to be alone, they think there is danger. Ah, they know nothing!"

Then one evening, weary of inaction, he caught his horse and rode toward the group of skin tents at the foot of a *barranca* in one of the titanic rifts of the pampas. Perhaps he was influenced by volumes of smoke from signal-fires; they were calling him home. He rode along unwillingly, the wind in his face seeming to thrust him back, but by and by came a long-drawn wailing that sent the pulses throbbing in his head. He thrust his heels into his horse's sides and galloped down upon the *toldos*.

"Aigh, aigh, aigh!" The cry of those who mourn for the dead struck him midway in the descent. "Aigh, aigh, aigh! the great, the wise *gow-nok*! Aigh, aigh, aigh! He is dead!"

The young man flung himself from

his horse and bowed his tall head to enter the tent where his father lay dumb and cold. The strong old giant who had so loved him all his life for once took no heed of his coming.

Kayuke beguiled his grief by fulfilling the sacrifices of death with a lavish generosity. The wailing was loud and long. Much silver gear and many horses and dogs were dedicated to the use of the dead *gow-nok* during his nine-days journey to the spirit land.

The burial over, the tribe immediately shifted camp, as is their custom when one among them dies. It was on the first march that Kayuke, cantering to his place at the head of the line of horses and people, saw a lad mounted on a restive colt and carrying a brown maiden behind him. He shouted to the boy, who laughed, and his sister also looked toward Kayuke and smiled.

The young man rode on, stricken into a sudden heavy silence. For he had read the meaning of his loneliness in the girl's dark eyes; this was the desire of his heart. The calling of the pampas wind, the long, long look of the sunset across the plain, he knew at last what they meant—Algo with her slow smile.

Algo! He had seen her day by day all her life, but with other eyes. His mind groped uncomprehendingly around the thought of her. Was she indeed the same tall girl he had beheld often enough catching and riding half-broken colts with her young brothers? Memories of her, dormant till now, struck at his consciousness with insensate vigor. Algo, Algo! A young laughing face, its gravity lost in play with other girls, guessing herself unmarked. Algo standing in a red shower of sunset against the black background of her mother's *toldo*.

The picture of her burned upon his mind. The splendid flawless body, sound to the core; untiring strength; bust ripened by the life of the wilderness; long trails of dark hair flying on the wind; shy, dark eyes; and that slow smile—that slow, heart-aching smile he could not rid his soul of!

Days passed. The Tehuelches are a

silent people, and even among them Kayuke was held to be one of few words. Now he spoke not at all, not even to his friend Tanlu.

One night by the fire in the *toldo*, his mother, with the black widow-paint upon her face, looking across at him from her seat among the fur rugs and ponchos, spoke.

"Why is your heart heavy, Kayuke? Would you bring a wife to help me in the *toldo*? Let it be according to your desire. I am content, for I grow old."

Kayuke started as if a touch had been laid upon a wound. He kicked away the dog that lay against his knee, and stood a moment, full of anger.

"To-morrow," went on his mother, "I will call Gengel, and tell him——"

But Kayuke cried out, "No!" and again hoarsely, "No!" He ran from the tent. To speak of Algo was more than he could bear. Gengel, the go-between, a broken tree of a man with limbs gnarled like the roots of a *califaté* bush, and a leer cut on his down-bent face! No, no, he must never be allowed to speak to Algo. The primal instinct of the lad lover was outraged by the approach of speech, laughter and hard bargaining—the customs that ushered marriage.

When at last he came back, he crouched sullenly by the embers with his pipe. But the smoke rising in sinuous curves took the form of a tall maiden, and melted before he could dwell upon its beauty. The flames glinted as eyes glint in the meeting with other eyes. The wind cried with a new loneliness through the crevices of the skin *toldo*, and he started up from sleep with the sound of Algo's voice sobbing in his ears.

It was only a dream, but he realized the one penetrating fact that only in his own *toldo*, only when she was his wife, could he stand between Algo and sorrow if it came. This thought forced the barrier of young love's reserve.

In the morning a great hunt of guanacos was to take place. Kayuke, though not yet chosen *gownok* in his father's room, had been asked to plan the drive for the hunters. With the

first chill of dawn, he rose from his ostrich-skins in the corner, and putting a pinch of salt in his girdle, stood with the curtain of the tent in his hand.

"Mother, speak thou to Gengel that he make the marriage-bargain, for I desire Algo, the daughter of Chingua, the sister of Melowe, to wife." And so he passed out with his heart in his throat.

Gengel's errand was heard gladly in the *toldo* of old Chingua, and with a promise of seven mares apiece to each of Algo's brothers, and an iron cooking-pot for her mother, the contract was made. And Gengel urged upon the family of the bride the wisdom of sending handsome presents in return to the widowed *china*, who sat in Kayuke's tent grieving, among the old dogs that could hunt no longer.

The day's chase was more than usually successful; pelts of young guanacos were brought back heaped upon the backs of the horses, and much meat to hang from the tent-poles to dry for use during the coming winter.

When Kayuke, outriding the cavalcade on the home-coming, cantered into the camp, he was met with screeching and raillery from the women, for all knew of the mission of Gengel and its happy issue. The young hunter spurred through the crowd to take refuge in his tent, where his mother still sat brooding beside the ashes. A tumult of contrary feelings clashed within him. He was ashamed but proud; his heart's secret was betrayed, yet he gloried in it. He no longer feared to meet Algo's eyes; he would fain have gone out before all his people and carried her away in his arms to be his wife.

The women, following him to the door of the *toldo*, saw that Orkingen moved not hand or foot, nor raised her eyes to her son. And knowing that her grief must yet lie heavy upon her—for the affections and consequently the capacity for sorrow when bereaved are strongly developed among the Tehuelches—they turned away, leaving her alone with Kayuke.

The young man took his pipe and sat down by the fire opposite to her, and

in a few words told her how the hunt had gone, and that many skins were coming, tied on the packhorses.

The old woman patted down her hair, cut short across her brows since her husband's death, with one hand, and taking the pipe from her lips with the other, answered gloomily: "It is well. For no marriage-feast can thou make, my son, until thou hast ridden for barter to the great water."

"Nay, for my marriage-feast comes; if not to-morrow, then the day after." And Kayuke laughed softly.

But Orkingen shook her head.

"Has Gengel then failed?" Kayuke asked, with a chill of misgiving in spite of the glad tidings conveyed by the greeting of the women.

"Gengel has in truth struck the marriage-bargain." And she told him the details. "But," she added bitterly, "although Gengel has nuptial jests ready upon his tongue, and knows how to guide the talk that the ears of those who hear drink in his persuasions, he is yet a fool!"

"Why, what has he done?"

"Is it not of common knowledge in the tribe that all her life Chingua has hungered for the iron pot your father brought for me from the coast, when you were but a babe in my arms? Now that the time has come and my son desires her daughter to wife, she has haggled for the cooking-pot, and Gengel has given it in his promises. Wuh! Is a girl with long hair like a mare's tail worth so much?"

"Mother, I will ride down to the mouth of the gray river and fetch you two such cooking-pots, if you will," replied Kayuke soothingly.

"Then go."

"But after the marriage-feast is over?" he urged.

Orkingen turned her black eyes heavy with reproach upon him. "And shall a stranger come into my *toldo* and see that her mother in her enviousness has left us beggared? Wherein shall I boil the mare's flesh for the feast? Thy father is dead, and I shall know shame before my tribe!"

The young man said no more. The

will of Orkingen must be done. Therefore after all the hunters had eaten, he called together the people and told them of his going. "Bring me ostrich-feathers and skins, the rugs and the ponchos that you have made, and I will ride down to the Santa Cruz, to the barter-place before the winter comes down upon us, and there I will buy all that we need. I will take also the troop of colts that my father gave me and sell them, that none may lack for gifts when I come again."

Kayuke did not know that the Gualichu, from his resting-place above the black forests, heard and sighed, for he foresaw that evil was drawing near—evil far worse than any he had wrought upon the tribes throughout the ages. But Kayuke, without foreboding, caught the strongest of the young horses, and set a saddle of sheepskins upon him for the first time, and rode him out across the pampas until the creature was almost broken, body and spirit—as is the manner of the Tehuelches when horse-taming—and in due time he rode away toward that quarter of the horizon where, as all the tribes knew, the sun rises after spending the night-hours in the gray-green and stormy sea.

The grass has grown for many and many a season over the camp-fires beside which Kayuke slept on that journey. For he was yet young and eager and full of hope when he came to the wide river of the Santa Cruz, where a ford lies between barren downs. The current was strong and rapid, and his troop of horses was forced to wait until the tide ran out of the broad estuary and at low water the three shingle banks showed in the stream. Still the water was very deep, and Kayuke rolled from his saddle, and holding the mane of his horse, directed it by splashing. The rest of the troop he drove before him until they found ground again upon the other side of the river.

He built a fire and tied a strip, torn from his lion-cloth upon a bush near at hand as an offering to the Gualichu. Next morning he rode into view of the settlement, which at that day consisted

of a few poor houses by the cold margin of the estuary.

But destiny stood between him and the colony of the whites. For on the border of the pampas, where no tree grows, but only lean thorn-bushes, he saw afar off a man with many pack-horses coming out toward him. At first he thought it was only a mirage like many others he had seen, until his horses and the horses of the stranger neighed one to the other as they drew nearer together.

Soon Kayuke could discern the rider, a small man, melon-colored, much bearded, with heavy cheeks and lips, a huge face overhanging a mean body. To his surprise this man greeted him in his own tongue and asked whither he was bound.

Kayuke replied silently after the manner of his people. He pointed to the skins and ostrich-feathers carried by his troop, and then to the group of houses in the distance by the water.

At this the stranger made much show of grief, and warned Kayuke that those who dwelt at the place of barter were evil men, stealers of horses, who knew cunning tricks whereby they could cheat the Tehuelches had they ten eyes instead of two, and that they would take away from him his feathers and rugs, his ponchos and his horses, and make him a slave, putting him to labor at dragging heavy logs up from the beach to build *toldos* of wood on the bank above the water.

And somehow the talk lengthened out, so that by the evening Kayuke found himself encamped in a hollow with his new friend, Rodriguez, who was opening his packs and spreading out their contents for the Tehuelches to look at.

"What more would you desire?" Rodriguez was saying. "Here you will see I have string shoes, flour, yerba, rich cloths, handkerchiefs of red and of yellow, ornaments for the women, guns even and cognac."

"Cognac?" Kayuke repeated the word with his slow intonation. "What is cognac?"

Rodriguez looked hard at the high-

featured, handsome face of the Tehuelche, and smiled slyly in his heart. "It is this," he replied, taking a half-empty bottle from under his sheepskin blanket. "There is a spirit dwells in this water. Thus when a man swallows the water, the spirit enters into him and he becomes a *cacique*, a chief, rich and happy."

"Wuh, wuh!" exclaimed the Indian. "A spirit, like Gualichu, dwells in the water? What is the meaning of this saying?"

"You shall know all, my brother," said Rodriguez. "Lead me to your *toldos*, and there I will trade with you, and live your life and none shall cheat my brothers."

"How knew you of our tribe? We are not of those who come down to traffic with the white men."

"My spirit made me to hear your horses' footsteps afar off," Rodriguez answered. "And behold, I am come forth to meet you. My spirit makes known all things." He fondled the bottle with his fleshy hand. "Drink, friend, put my words to the test, and make great thy heart."

Kayuke drank, and soon the thoughts which for long had troubled him with their vague insistence seemed to grow clear. He understood all things, he felt a new might in his arms, his mounting brain realized glorious dreams. Here was a true spirit, who made men to become gods and walk the earth!

Next morning the two *compañeros*, with their troops of horses rode away together into the west.

The trader was crafty. At every halt he "made great the heart" of Kayuke with the mysterious cognac spirit. And before the brown tents of guanacoscine rose into sight, the young Tehuelche had learned to believe and to glory in his drunken dreams.

It was thus the arch-enemy of the Indians came among them, and the kindly people made for him a *toldo* to the east of the encampment.

Not many days after, when the sky was blue and the sunshine lay warm upon the pampas, though the breeze

still blew keen from the mountains, Kayuke combed the mane and tail of his favorite piebald, and loaded it with silver gear. Then he spread the floor of his tent with the richest skins, rugs of ostrich, puma, fox and guanaco, and with cloths from overseas brought by the trader. He bound a band of scarlet about his brows and his dark locks, and throwing a mantle of painted skins upon his shoulders, he set forth to fetch home his bride.

At her *toldo* he dismounted, and pulling the reins over his horse's head, left it standing while he hastily strode within. Round the fire sat Chingua with a circle of black-haired young men, her sons. These Kayuke saw but dimly, for beyond them in the dusky shadows stood a tall girl, straight and strong and shapely. The young lover leaped across the skin-strewn floor and caught her royally in his great arms. Pinioned thus closely, Algo could not resist after the custom of maidens; but she set her white teeth in his wrist, and he carried the little crescent of scars to his dying day.

Then Kayuke rode away with his bride, the people following with shoutings and singing. At once lassos were flung on the chosen mares, and knives thrust into their throats. The crowding dogs were driven away from the offal, usually their portion; for it is unlucky that dogs should taste of a marriage-feast. Tanlu, the friend of Kayuke among the young men, carried that which should not be given to the people to eat, together with the heart and liver, to a hillock on the pampas, and there made a fire to burn them.

Never had been such a marriage-feasting. The painted, child-minded, child-happy savages ate and danced around the fires. Kayuke, with Tanlu sitting beside him, called to Rodriguez to bring the spirit water to make great their hearts. For Kayuke meant to drink deep, in his guilelessness believing that as he appeared to himself in his drunken fancies, so he would in truth stand out, a glorious being, before the eyes of Algo.

The crafty half-breed came cringing

and flattering to the fires, and drove a wonderful trade in the maddening liquor he sold. There was a sudden cry raised of the Gualichu, and in a moment the men had sprung on their horses, and were careering across the treeless land to scare him away according to their ancient rites. Then back to the blazing fires to drink again.

While they feasted the old wizard of the tribe, adorned with lines of white paint upon his face, arose and chanted out a rugged song of blessing. At intervals of the chanting, the men, already wrought on by the liquor, howled and pranced in the sunlight around the fires, while the frightened women stood outside the circles, and some even hid themselves in their tents.

But Algo stayed by Kayuke, though the cognac spirit quickened the great, quick beatings of his heart to turbulence and frenzy, and he boasted and quarreled and capered in furious evolutions with the young men, till the nodding ostrich-plumes upon their heads became broken and dragged. Kayuke seemed to have forgotten his bride, he yelled his own praises, his prowess on the hunting-ground, his exploits as a tamer of horses. As he leaped, whirling his *boleadores* in the air, Tanlu stumbled against him, and both fell together. But Kayuke, maddened by the offense, as he imagined it to be in his drunkenness, caught up an iron skewer upon which the ribs of a mare were roasting, and shaking the meat from it, hurled it with all his strength at Tanlu. It pierced the mantle of painted skins, and the broad brown chest beneath, so that Tanlu, with one foot in the ashes, gasped away his life beside the fire.

Others also, seeing the blood flow, were seized with the fighting-passion, and a battle arose fierce but short among the *toldos*. Unfortunately no one killed Rodriguez. He sought safety in his own tent, and when in time the noise of the fighting died away, he wrapped his greasy poncho round him and peered out into the evening. The men of the tribe lay tossed about the ground in grotesque attitudes, sleeping

in the wind. Among them he distinguished the mighty form of Kayuke, the newly named *gownok*, prone upon the bare pampas, his hand laid over the stiffening hand of Tanlu.

Meanwhile Algo sat alone in the *toldo* of her husband, and wept beside the little fire of bush, for she knew the inexorable custom of her tribe: Thus dawn came to the camp.

Kayuke awoke heavy-headed. What was that he had heard? Algo crying on his name. "Kayuke, Kayuke, come to my aid!" He lay still with a strange throb of fear at his heart. What had happened? Surely joy was not far off, it had seemed to hover above him in his dreams. Yet—was not that the voice of woe sounding in the camp?

His will was to arise, but his body lacked power. His great limbs were inert and reluctant—they seemed to serve the will of some other, not his own. Was this sickness? He, who had never known illness, was heavy with a strange heaviness. Had he grown old in a night? Turned from his mighty manhood to be an old slow man? An unreasoning dejection clouded his thoughts. He was like an ailing child. He remembered nothing of the tragedy of the past night. But by degrees recollections came to him of his bridal day, of Algo clasped like a struggling bird in his arms, of sitting at her side while they feasted. He recalled his proud intention of drinking and becoming as a god before her. Then—a blank.

This impression startled him. He raised his head with a violent movement, and gazed transfixed. There within a hand's breadth of his own face, the dead face of Tanlu stared back at him. He sprang to his feet with a cry of wrath. He looked down on the body, twisted in its death-agony, for none had dared to touch it. He saw blood on the dead mouth, the iron skewer fast in his friend's breast. Who had done this thing?

He cast his gloomy eyes around. Groups of men and women half-hidden between the *toldos*, or peeping out from their dusky curtains, were watching him. An air of expectancy and terror

brooded over the camp. This in itself was so curiously at variance with the experience of his whole life, that it perplexed him. He strode toward the *toldos*, but as he came near the people disappeared.

Then hearing wailing from the tent of Tanlu, he turned and stood within its doorway. The young *china*, Tanlu's wife, sat moaning on the floor, her face blackened with paint, her hair cut short. She glanced up, and hid her face in her hands. But an old woman, Tanlu's mother, rose from her place. She spoke no word, she gave Kayuke no look, but she turned her back upon him. Then many figures seemed to arise in the gloom and with one accord turned their backs upon him.

Kayuke stepped outward like a stricken man. Vainly he sought in his memory for some explanation. Tanlu was dead, killed by some foe, and yet the tribe turned their backs upon him—Kayuke! For this is the punishment for crime among the Tehuelches. Neither blows nor death, but ostracism and banishment. The man who slays another is cast out from among his people. He must go forth to dwell alone by his camp-fire, out of sight and communion with those he has injured. He must bear his sin far from his tribe; he is fit only to lurk with pumas in the thickets. Kayuke, scarcely knowing what he did, made his way to his own tent. Surely this was but a bad dream, which must pass. He grasped the ridge-pole with one hand as if to steady himself, and out of the dimness the familiar objects grew clear round him. There was the couch of ostrich-skin as he had spread it only yesterday. He started. Algo! She must be here. But though he looked yearningly, the *toldo* was empty.

"Aigh, aigh, aigh!" he moaned, "who will tell me the thing that I have done?" He laid his heavy head upon his breast and sat thinking. Even Algo had left him. Tanlu dead and by his hand? He began to feel the truth crush in upon him, though no memory remained of that dreadful deed. Later the people saw him come forth. He

took down the poles of his *toldo*, he gathered his troop of horses together, and his hounds tailed in among them. Then he stood beside the spot from which they had carried away the dead man and spoke aloud.

"I will ride into the mountains and there fight hand to hand with the Gualichu. For it is not I who have killed my brother, but the Gualichu within me has done this thing. Aigh, aigh! I will stand in the snow-fed rivers till the cold shall drive the Gualichu to depart from my body. A curse is on me." Dropping his head, he rode past the fire by which he had danced but yesterday, still wearing his broken feathers, and passed away into the sunlight. "Sorrow and trouble lie on me like snow on the high pampas," he moaned. "Another heart is in my breast." Then followed strange days.

A story is told of a Patagonian Indian, whom Magellan decoyed on board that adventurous vessel of his, a destined gift for the King of Spain. But the unhappy captive was overapt to learn the bitter lesson of grief; he pined and died almost before the low coastline was hidden in the sea, before the smell of the land lost itself in the wide water-scents.

So Kayuke, bereaved, rode on north and west day by day, apathetic, like a dog that frets for its master, with a dusk of sorrow in his eyes. He brooded without ceasing on the events of that last day, but the look on Algo's face that had thrilled him as he held her to his breast, was incessantly blotted out by the ghastly mask of Tanlu dead. He did not know that all this woe had befallen him for the enrichment of the trader, Rodriguez, who had made some hundred dollars over the marriage festival, the price of a dumb, giant heart-break.

The only poetry-book of these nomad people is that which Nature spreads before them. It contains three poems. The poem of the flat pampas, with its whispering winds, its grasses blown level, its lipless lagoons where water-fowl cry in the evenings. Beyond this the poem of the blue lakes, strung in

a long line under the shadow of the mountains, and haunted by fierce tempests. Lastly the huge epic of the Cordilleras, a volume the Tehuelche leaves unopened, and which has never yet been wholly read of man.

Kayuke, looking about him in his loneliness, came to understand an essential need of humanity—the need of contrast, of change. For the strong vital forces in him revolted against despair. Moments came upon him when in the thrill of splendid life he shouted as a gale shouts among demented trees. In the windy blue of the mornings he would roll on the hard earth and hear his heart singing the old song of joy. But such intervals passed quickly, quenched in remembrance. The long evenings, gray or golden, lit fires that flamed and fell in the great untaught intelligence. His thoughts were vague, never logical, but without end. Sleeping and living on the breast of a primordial land, he grew oppressed with infinity, visions unimaginable visited him, bygone ages swept over his desolated head.

So moving onward, he journeyed into a region of basaltic hills, a wilderness hard to tread, brown and stony, almost waterless, where thousands of guanaco called on the heights, but where the ground was so treacherous that no horse could keep his footing to pursue them. In the evening he found a little pool, yellowed round with limp and withered grasses, offering little feed for his troop of horses; but water was there, the wanderer's chief demand. He camped beside it for the night, trusting to his instinct to find his way out of the desert on the morrow.

That night Kayuke was in the depths. His exile from his kind, from the homes of men, weighed upon him. But above all the wound left by the loss of Algo bled ever inwardly and drained him of the desire to live. How could he face the long years alone, without her? He laid his head upon his knees and groaned. The loneliness was becoming overstrong for him. For this was not the solitude he sought of old, which could be ended at will, but

a solitude enduring, and not to be escaped.

He pictured the girls running between the *toldos*, and with them that vigorous young shape he was never to look upon again. He caught a glimpse of the long locks flying upon the wind, the long black hair of Algo. Love and family ties and the joys of home and young children about their knees are master-passions in the Tehuelches. Men who lose their wives, destroy their possessions, kill their horses and dogs, flinging away these lesser things when the core of life, that which made all else worth the having, is gone forever.

Kayuke bowed his head. Hope was cold. His strength failed him. For the first time, perhaps, the future stood up stark and naked before him. The uncanny sounds of that desolate place were suddenly pierced by one familiar and homelike—the neigh of a horse. The young man looked up. His own troop were feeding quietly in the hollow about the pool, but opposite to him rose one of the innumerable bare moundlike hills of the region, and over its summit—an incredible sight in that empty land—hung the faces of two horses, staring down at their fellows in the valley. Kayuke sat as if turned to stone, gazing at the vision. For one of the two horses had a star set high upon the brow, running its whiteness into the forehead-lock of the mane—Algo's favorite, one of the troop she owned.

The young man was staring upward, fixed and breathless, at the motionless horses, when a hand fell softly on his shoulder. He leaped to his feet. Algo herself stood beside him, holding the mane of the horse she had been riding.

Clogged with long thoughts, his mind moved slowly; he was bewildered. Why was she here?

She spoke no word, but stood there, shy, splendid, beautiful, with downcast eyes, a little smile trembling about her mouth.

"You left me—on that day," Kayuke said in a dull voice. "I went to the *toldo*—but it was empty."

Her great eyes flashed up at him. "They took me away."

"Aigh, aigh! I slew Tanlu," he murmured. It was all he could find to say.

"Nay, not you, Kayuke, it was the spirit of the white man that slew him," she answered. "We lit the death-fires for Tanlu, and gave him the burial of a great hunter."

Kayuke shook his head and held out his right hand with a gesture so tragic that tears welled over in the girl's eyes. "My right hand is guilty, yet it remembers not the blow," he said.

"Aigh, aigh! you knew it not." And she took his hand and laid it on her breast. "Hear me, Kayuke. This is the hand of my husband. I stole from the *toldos* to follow thee. I tracked the feet of thy horses and put my horses' feet upon them."

"But I am an outcast. I must dwell alone, far from my tribe. No man will give me back words for my words even if I speak them," he went on.

"What matters that to me? I am thy wife."

Kayuke was trembling greatly. "Algo, what saying is this? I must wander far to rid myself of the evil spirit that has cursed me. I must seek out those places where the Gualichu dwells, and strive with him. Alone in the snow weakness and death may come upon me. What will a woman do there?"

"Death shall take me also, Kayuke, for still I will follow thee." The dark, beautiful eyes met his with love, the proud uplifted head and the dawning smile lightened his heavy heart. Algo was with him, what mattered all else? He laid his arm across her shoulders and his head fell beside hers.

Thus it came to pass that Kayuke with Algo his wife began their long exile. They turned their backs on the Olnie Eikon, and with sixteen mares and two troops of horses, stone knives for skinning and cutting up game, copper *boleadores*, and a cooking-pot, they rode on leisurely north and west. At length they came to a small stream winding between gray heights, splashing its yellowish waters about the knotted roots of *califaté* bushes. Men

now call it the Rio Fenix, and about it in these latter days a great dispute of nations has raged. But in Kayuke's time it was all his own, and following its course the little camp moved ever toward the western battlement of mountains. Day by day summit and scarp and winding cleft grew clear out of the blue dusk of the range.

On a noon of radiant sunshine, as the exiles rode in the teeth of a chill wind, with the shadow of a condor's wings passing to and fro over the troop of horses ahead, they pushed slowly up a long rolling billow of land, and from its crest the view of a huge lake opened under their eyes. The water, of a pale blue, was torn into breakers where the wind struck it, and across it, fronting them, stood up the Cordilleras.

For a moment husband and wife gazed affrighted; for before his misfortunes had fallen on him, Kayuke, like all Tehuelches, would have fled from this lake with its terrific rampart of frowning cliffs. For this was the Iemisch Eikon, the home of the Iemisch, that amphibious monster, the dragon of Indian legends, which is so large that it can devour man and horse together at a mouthful.

Kayuke looked long at the distant snowy peaks, then at the nearer phalanx of lesser mountains, their brown, naked shoulders ranked in line as though they stood in the forefront of an army.

Then he flung back his mantle of fur, and striking a blow on his own big brown shoulder, he shouted: "Shall we fear these, Algo, these, who are my brethren?"

Algo turned to her husband. The claim of kinship seemed, in truth, not so far amiss.

A new heart had been born in Kayuke, and he now felt assured that were the Iemisch to arise out of the depths of those stormy waters, he had the strength to kill it, and to take its skin for his couch. Perhaps Algo feared still at times, but when she looked on Kayuke she forgot all fear, for she loved him with the power of the primeval instinct, that relies on the

lustihood and fighting quality of its mate.

For two days they rode along the southern shore of the great lake, crossing four small rivers, till at length they reached a great stream. This also they crossed after much struggle with the horses, and found themselves in a tract of forest land, where wild currants grew and the wind was silent and tormented them no more; where the air was heavy with the drowsy perfume of incensio-trees and brilliant yellow blossoms; where herds of spike-horned deer wandered, and which was haunted by the cooing of rapturous doves.

Here Kayuke made his camp, driving his mares and horses to graze on the table-land westward, where was rich pasture, and which, lying between twin rivers, held them captive so that they could not stray away. "Here will we abide a while, Algo," Kayuke said, "for it is the Good Spirit who keeps watch from the red rocks above us. It is his breath that stirs in the trees which are asleep. It is good to be here."

So these two dwelt in the warm valley of the torrent. Kayuke lived his hunter's life, increasing in strength to his prime. Ostriches and guanaco he killed upon the table-land, the autumn woods resounded with the wooing of the deer, and winter laid its hand but slightly on their sheltered home. Algo, happy and beautiful, bore children in that unsullied paradise, and the *toldo* was lined with the skins of pumas. Meantime upon the table-land their stock increased, long-tailed horses bay and brown and piebald, and they called them after their colors. Each evening the great drove would descend neighing to drink of the angry torrent that tumbled through the gorge; and the time came when Algo's eldest-born, Tanlu, could grip a horse with his red baby knees.

All these years no sign of humanity from the outer world troubled them, no distant hunting-fire piled its clouds of smoke into the wonderful pale blue of the sky. Once only had Kayuke spoken of return. "Our exile has been long enough," he said. "If we will, we can

now look again upon the faces which once we knew."

Algo's answer was the mourning cry, "Aigh, aigh!"

Kayuke mused long over the fire, then he stood long at the door of the *toldo*, looking out upon the valley. When he came back to sit on his rugs beside the hot ashes, he met his wife's anxious gaze. "Exile is good," he murmured. "Let the hunting-fires of our tribe burn without us."

And Algo cooed in content to the babe at her breast. So peace reigned over them, while the seasons changed and passed. Until on an evening when Algo, watching her young sons wrestle with and ride the wild colts, saw her husband galloping homeward against the sinking shafts of the sun. And a sudden fear struck her, for there was haste in his movement. When he drew up at the *toldo*, she knew the fashion of his face was altered.

"What is it, Kayuke?" she asked in her soft, guttural speech. "Has a horse died, or is thy *boleadores* broken?"

"To-day," Kayuke answered, "I have seen the hunting-fires of our people."

"Near?" she cried in alarm.

"Two-days march to the south."

Algo breathed deeply. "They will not come hither," she said. "Our people fear the Gualichu, who has fled from before you, whose name we have almost forgotten."

At these words Kayuke snatched up a flaming brand from the fire, and ran out to the back of the *toldo*, shouting and waving his brand to scare the Gualichu, whose shadow, compelled by those distant smokes, seemed once more to have fallen upon his life. The younger children clung to their mother's skirts. Never before had the old tribal custom been practised in the valley. A sadness gathered in Algo's eyes; the thing was of ill omen, it oppressed her with a sense of coming sorrow.

From that day Kayuke grew restless. The yearning to mingle with his kind, long asleep in his breast, woke and stung him into discontent. Algo watched in silence, ever dreading the morrow and all that it might bring.

Three days passed, and then Kayuke spoke, though he knew his words would be unwelcome to his wife.

"Algo, we will take a small troop of horses and go to meet our people. See!" He raised his fingers one after another and showed notches in the hard flesh, two upon each finger of the right hand, one upon each finger of the left. "For every winter I have made a mark. Fifteen winters have passed; surely the old time is forgotten and I shall be no more an outcast. Come, let us go."

Algo made no answer, but busied herself according to Kayuke's commands; yet in her eyes the gloom deepened. Who knows with what thoughts those two touched the Indian trail again? In the evening they came upon an old camp-fire, and after the manner of the nomadic tribes built their own over its ashes. The march from Olmie Eikon with its incidents of trouble and joy came back with strange vividness—their fifteen years of exile seemed as a dream.

The trail grew fresher as they traveled southward, until on the mid-afternoon of a windy day they saw the *toldos* of the tribe lying small and dark by the wide curve of a river. The dogs of the encampment gave tongue long before the little group of exiles approached. The tents poured forth their occupants, so that a line of figures stood waiting for the outcast and his companions.

Kayuke sat rigid upon his horse, with a mantle of skins about his middle, his naked torso like a Hercules modeled in red clay. His wife and children behind him, he waited for the invitation to dismount, the lack of which would mean dismissal. His glance passed slowly down the line, but the faces and forms seemed not those he had left behind when he went out with a bitter heart into the wilderness. These whom he now looked upon were clothed as the white trader had been clothed in that long-dead day. The flowing mantles, the ancient garb that had emphasized inherent dignity, were replaced by garments that lent their own ill-shaping to the big-built, muscular men.

Arraigned before the sun and the wondering eyes of the exiles, they were in truth a grotesque company, replete with the deforming, vulgarizing quality that European dress seems so remorselessly to bestow upon the savage.

Presently an Indian stood out of the line and came toward them. He wore a time-stained coat which cramped the movements of his once-strong body, and a native *chiripa* in place of trousers; but on his shrunken, naked legs a pair of top-boots. The red fillet with which the Tehuelches were wont to tie down and adorn their dark locks had made way for a greasy hat. Yet Kayuke saw some familiar look on the sodden face.

"Is this not our brother, Kayuke?" said the man, blinking up at their rider. "Come, brother, sit beside the fire of the tribe."

"Aigh, aigh!" moaned Algo to herself, "surely this man was Orweki the hunter."

Kayuke dismounted, off-saddled, and turned his horses loose in the green marsh that fringed the river. And Algo, with her children, inquired for the well-being of her people. Some there remembered her well, and hurried her with all the kindliness of their hearts to the *toldo* of Melowe, her brother.

"Thy mother, Chingua, lives. Hasten then, Algo."

For all her life Algo remembered that scene. On the floor of the *toldo* an indistinguishable litter of children and dogs, Melowe's children, but hunched high above their sprawling figures, a huge bloated woman sat by the fire, with disheveled hair, her pipe dropping from her lips.

"Chingua, Chingua, look up, see, thy daughter has come back to thee," cried the eager voices of the women.

The old *china* moved one shoulder after the other sullenly. "I have no daughter. She is gone from the tribe," she said.

"Nay, look up, mother, I am here." Algo sat down beside the mountain of flesh and placed her youngest boy by the hunched knees.

Chingua raised her bleared eyelids

and looked long at her daughter. Then a wheedling smile loosened the sulky mouth, and she cried: "We will drink, my daughter, the spirit-water will make me glad. For thy old mother hath many pains. Let a bottle be brought, and we will laugh to see the yellow line as it sinks within it, and thou and I will cheer ourselves. What hast thou that we can exchange for a good bottle?"

Heartsick, Algo tried to coax the old woman's thoughts away, but failed most hopelessly.

For Chingua grew angered. And so Algo went out to seek Kayuke. Kayuke stood among a group of men, some of his own contemporaries, some that had been but boys when last he saw them. They turned him about, jeering good-humoredly at his Tehuelche garments. "Look at Kayuke! look at him!" they cried.

He stood there upright and smiling a little, like a god among them. He was naked save for his *chiripa*, and on his feet he wore boots of *potro*-hide, made by himself as his forefathers had made them. His dark eyes were clear and bright, and his great muscles rose upon his limbs when he stirred. Nor did they find Algo less marvelous. Tall, sound as a young tree grown in the wind, her dusky beauty gloried in its savage motherhood.

And over against them stood the tribe that had driven them into exile fifteen years before, travesties of civilization, with drink-shot eyes, clamorous. "Come pitch your *toldo* among us," they said. "And to-night we will feast, for you have returned."

Algo, going down to the river for water, saw the younger women busy burying knives and guns. Even the spits for roasting were hidden, and she asked the reason.

"They feast to-night," was all the answer, but to Algo it was the volume of her life and Kayuke's. How would it end?

Meanwhile Kayuke sat beside the fires and talked with the men. But his mind was working behind his talk. He was suffering the violation of many

memories. Were these stupid faces with their pouched and watery eyes the same he knew in his youth? What had worked the alteration? Never had the keen wind of the pampas loosened the skin into bags and swept away the strength of manhood? The sunlight, pouring down upon the people, brought all other changes into a horrible prominence. These were chattering creatures, loose-mouthed, lean-limbed, not the living statuary of red, firm flesh, heavy-faced, dignified representatives of physical glory.

But Kayuke had no words in which to clothe the feelings wrenching at his breast. Had there been a white trader with the tribe, it may be that his blood would have paid forfeit in a wholly inadequate manner for the sins of his fellows, at the hands of the mighty Tehuelche. The feast began, and liquor was set out in bottles and cups. But the eating was not like the royal regalement that he remembered—the tin cups passed round too soon and too often. Kayuke sat like a carven figure among his kindred while they danced and sang, and, as the orgies deepened,

disputes broke out and they came to blows. The outcast understood at last the tragedy of his life. Thus had Tanlu been slain. While he brooded a tipsy, gesticulating fellow held a full cup to his mouth. Then Kayuke arose, and seizing the bottles, dashed them in pieces. He crushed up the tin cups in his hands, for the reek of the spirit had set light to the fire of fierce memories in his heart—memories of agony and sorrow grown remote.

He called aloud to Algo, and the frightened *chinas* gathered out of the tents to watch the big figure of Kayuke separate his troop from the horses of the tribe. And then those two mounted, and with their children vanished forever from the *toldos* of their dying people.

No human eye ever saw Kayuke or Algo again. One story has it that they perished in the snow. Another that in some gorge of the Cordilleras, deaf to the footsteps of the white men, their children's children dwell, holding at bay for a few years longer the relentless coming of those who bore such a cruel gift to the Tehuelches.



THE WORLD'S HEAVIEST BOYS

THE two heaviest boys in the world live on a farm in Texas, and, although their united ages do not exceed fourteen years, their combined weights total 360 pounds.

The elder boy—William Ashcroft—looks a veritable mountain of flesh and weighs 255 pounds, yet he continues to put on flesh at the rate of 20 pounds a year. He is 5 feet 2 inches high, and has a waist measurement of 53 inches. In spite of his size and weight, however, he moves about without any inconvenience.

At his birth William weighed 9½ pounds, and when only one year old weighed 52 pounds. At five years of age he was as large as a full-grown man, his weight being at that time 137 pounds.

His brother Ernest is a close rival. At birth he weighed 10 pounds, but now, while only four years of age, he turns the scale at 105 pounds. He is 3 feet 7 inches high, and has a waist measurement of 36 inches.

The most remarkable thing about the phenomenal sizes of these two boys is that their parents are of ordinary stature. Their father is about 6 feet, and weighs 168 pounds, and their mother is 5 feet 10 inches, and weighs 150 pounds. Mr. and Mrs. Ashcroft have five other children, all girls, and none of them show any signs of unusual physical growth or development. On the contrary, the girls are delicate and unusually light of weight for their ages.

Jack Bellamy, Lawbreaker

By B. M. Bower

Author of "Pirates of the Range," Etc.

II.—TWO BIRDS IN THE BUSH

A Western story full of go from start to finish. The man who "believed he'd die if he was penned up anywhere" here makes a getaway in most approved "bad man" fashion. Shows that the uses of the looking-glass are not always vanity.

(A Complete Story)



WHEN a man is on the dodge and yet wants to earn his own living and earn it mainly honest, he's apt to get right down to cases at times and take up with most anything in the way of a job. Anyway, that's been my experience.

Next winter after I inadvertently got the sheriff to dreaming about me nights and longing for me by day, I found myself necked up to a sample of honest toil that for nerve-strain and general debilitizing influence would put a crimp in anything else I ever tackled. I'd hung around in the upper country till I kind of wore out my welcome, and was beginning to see that working over your friends into modern Ananias on your account isn't real polite, nor yet safe.

They was good friends, all right; but they'd lied themselves black in the face till the novelty wore off, putting the officers on the wrong trail when they come nosing around my sylvan retreat, and I can't say that I blame 'em. I took the hint before they was put to the painful necessity of making it too

plain, and rolled my bed and struck out with the intentions of playing my game out single-handed and not borrowing any chips.

First off, I strikes this job and freezes to it before I'd walked around and sized it up like I would have if the need of toil hadn't been so urgent. It was range-herding a bunch of fifteen hundred dogies. Dogies are calves as has been shipped in a poor condition from the farm States, to fatten up on the range.

My fellow sufferer was a Swede—the brand that has pretty blue eyes and pink cheeks, and fuzz all over his face, and wears four-ply vests that button on the side, and home-made breeches half way to his hocks, and the smile that you couldn't scour off with sand. I reckon you've met up with gentlemen of that ilk, as they say. Only he was still more ilker than I'd seen before in my travels.

Well, I started in along about the last of August, brave as anything and prepared to make the best of both the dogies and the Swede. His name was Helga Svenstrom. But after the first twenty-four hours of him and the dogies I called him just plain Hel. He

answered to it all right, and it was sure satisfying to me; so we didn't get along so poor.

But them dogies! Say, if any other gazabo ever offers to let me range-herd dogies, I'll kill him for the insult and go get me a job herding sheep. In the first place, dogies is brought up wrong. They're used to barnyards and milking-time and cabbage-leaves for dessert, and drinking alongside some farmer's finger with their noses rammed into a pail of warm skim-milk. They don't savvy the range, and to teach 'em the first rudiments of rustling is plumb heart-breaking.

We'd leave 'em all peaceful at sundown, and next day they'd be faded plumb out of our ken. Maybe one speckled-faced little runt would take it into his head to go back to his childhood home, and would amble off by himself for ten or fifteen miles; others would get that same feeling and they'd start too, on their high lonesomes; and seeing they never seemed to agree on the direction, Hel and I would have to ride the high-lines and gather in the dear little pets before the wolves beat us to them.

When we got a couple headed toward home, one would maybe lay down and eye us reproachful, and the other would lope gaily off to the sky-line. They were plumb saturated with individuality, them dogies was; I never once caught two of the fifteen hundred trying to go in the same direction. One would fix his eyes on a rim of rocks ten miles off, and head for it, thinking maybe it was haystacks. And seeing he wouldn't turn out for a blame thing on the way, me and Hel used to make some pretty rides trailing up the wanderer, which would be hiking, tail in the air, across the level, and rough-locking himself and sliding into coulees that would make the bulge of a State-capitol dome look easy-going. Hel and I hadn't been at it a week till we wore a harassed air common, and commenced talking in our sleeps—only Hel always framed up his remarks in Swede that sure sounded weird, coming out of the dark like that.

Well, we stayed with it, though I'm blessed if I know why, till cold weather. Then the head push set us down in a line-camp out twenty miles or so from anywhere, with the railroad running within a hundred yards of the shack just to make us realize how civilization could trot past our door-step and us be still stranded in a howling wilderness.

We was near the mouth of a deep coulée, and the railroad cut across lower down, with fences and snowguards, and the like. I don't know as I ever saw a poorer place for a line-camp, and I told Hel so. He never saw many line-camps of any kind, so he just grinned and said "Jaw," and let it go at that. That was the worst of Hel; I could cuss him and the dogies and the country and the weather, eloquent and free, and wind up with a fluting all round, and begin again and rip up the whole universe with my stinging sarcasm, and Hel would show a couple more teeth and say "Jaw." Those times, I wanted a lot to kill Hel off.

We was supposed to keep cases on the dogies and not let 'em pile up on the track and wait patiently for a flyer or something to come along and push 'em off. They seemed to feel horribly fascinated at the idea of getting a few legs broke, and there was a heap of rivalry among 'em as to which would get inside the fence and onto the track first. Oh, they was a brilliant bunch of animals, all right!

We'd been laboring with 'em a month, maybe, when we got it straight off the north pole with all the trimmings; snow till you couldn't open your eyes against it, and a wind that made you stagger like you'd looked too long and too frequent on the flowing whisky-glass, and cold—I won't try to say how cold it was. We hugged camp close and played coon-can, because that's a game you can play without the use of your mouth; and once I'd learnt it to Hel thorough I could tell him to shut up and play, and then get some rest from hearing him mutilate the language of the free.

After that first blizzard let up, we didn't see no more dogies. Before we had time to get out and hunt 'em up, down she comes again with both feet, and worse and more of it. Why, there was days when we hated to chance going to the stable to tend the horses, for fear we couldn't get back again. The like of them blizzards I never did see before nor since.

One thing about 'em I liked—at first. I'd had a kind of grouch at the way the big line of coaches used to come boring straight at us out of the deep cut on the far side of the coulée, roar down at us till you'd think they was going to walk all over us, and then flirt around a curve and out of sight in another deep cut. I haven't got anything against railroads; they're all right, in their place, but I've always felt that their place ain't out on the range. In a cow country they're a plumb nuisance, what with their tracks for cattle to bunch on, and their fences to hold 'em once they do get inside, and—oh, a railroad-track messes up the scenery in a good grass country. That coulée we was in was sure a peach—only the railroad-track spoiled it, and every train that went galloping past our humble cot done so with a condescending air that was plumb aggravating.

So, when I heard 'em come wheezing out of the cut in that first storm, I says: "You're up against it for fair, and you won't wear your smoke-stack quite so haughty if this keeps up and you have to buck more snow." "Jaw," grins Hel, disclosing a tooth I'd never noticed before. I made a few more remarks that I won't record here for various reasons, and then we sat there with our feet on the stove and listened to the big freight labor and cuss and snort and bellow, out there in the storm. It sounded real comfortable to me.

Things kept up like that for a long time. Our dogies was plumb vanished, and so we didn't have anything much to do but feed our saddle-horses and kill time and wait for a thaw. Hel rustled some stuff and made him some of these long snow-shoes—"shees" he called 'em, and I termed 'em "skis,"

which I'd read was the name—and took to playing on the hills like a wolf-pup by his den when the sun shines warm. I kinda looked down on him for it, at first; but after time got to weighing about twenty ounces to the pound—and a dickens of a lot of pounds to the day—I laid aside my dignity and learnt how to skate around on the things; which was about the only lucky thing I done that winter. I'd get out on the side-hill overlooking the deepest cut, and watch the trains buck through the drifts. Snow-plows got plenty along that line, and it was a poor day that didn't see two or three wade past.

The week before Christmas, though, the weather faired up and it looked like the north pole had gone back home and wouldn't spend any more time touring through Montana; and the trains got to galloping past and kicking up their heels around the curve like young horses turned out to pasture. There was snow, though, plenty of it, and then some.

Then one morning we got up to find a blizzard tearing large chunks out of all previous records. It was my day to do the outside work, and Hel's to keep house, so I wasn't in what you could call a real pleasant mood. I hate having fine snow drift my ears full and ball up my eyelashes, and I was plumb sore at the way Hel smiled and said "Jaw" when I cussed the weather.

So, when the big, fancy passenger-train that had whooped across the coulée so haughty just a short time before came snorting out of the big cut with its nose all over white and throwing up loads of black smoke into the storm, I stood on the door-step and made remarks, and wished it all kinds of bad luck.

"I hope yuh git stuck," I says to it. "You ain't got any license to break into the peace and quietude of our little coulée, anyhow. Your place is back where the fences grow thick and is painted to match the trimmings on the houses. When you come out into God's country you sure ought to have it handed to you with both fists—and if I

ain't guessing wrong, right here and now is where you'll get yours."

"Jaw," grins Hel at my shoulder. "She ben a gude vone, av he gates t'rough, A tank."

"Aw, go back and wash your dishes," I says ungracious. Hel went; he generally did do about what I told him, which accounts for him being alive at present.

Well, the train wheezes and snorts and grunts, and creeps across the coulée all right. The engine shuts its eyes and bows its neck and goes at the cut on our side, determined as sin; and I watches with interest. From the direction of the wind, and with the drifts piled between the cabin and stables to judge by, I was ready to gamble that cut was full and spilling snow over the edges. And I guess I'd 'a' won, all right.

The engine went on out of sight, and the baggage and mail-cars; but they were going mighty leisurely, I noticed. And so, when I called Hel to look, they were stopped, stuck right there for fair. They tried to back up, but they couldn't do business, and the conductor and some other guys got off and wallowed around some, and I hollered to ask if they wanted us to help push; but I guess they didn't hear. They was having troubles of their own, and I think from the way they flopped their arms and waggled their heads there was some language floating around. Then the blizzard drew the veil over the scene, as you might say, and all there was left of the view was a long black streak across the coulée-mouth.

Pretty soon it got dark, and a string uh lights begun to shine out real neighborly. Hel got supper; and when we set down with the frying-pan on one corner of the table and tomatoes in the can they come in, and cream the same, and prunes in the basin they was cooked in, and biscuits and sirup likewise, I couldn't help thinking what a different layout it was from that out there in the storm; the diner with real table-cloths and napkins, and silver tools to eat with, and things dished up fancy with green trimmings around the

meat—oh, I've eat civilized in my varied career, and I don't mind saying that I kinda like it for a change. Only for the chance of running up against somebody that I wouldn't be happy to meet, and that would be a lot too happy to meet me, I'd 'a' waded over and eat in the diner, for luck and a change of feed. Hel's cooking is a lot like his talk: too darn restricted to keep a fellow interested very long.

All that evening I kept thinking of the way Spoon Coulée had got civilized without warning and without price, and wondering about the new influx of population. I could set there with my heels scorching on the stove and size up the lay, almost to a man. The drummer in the check clothes and sandy mustache, and the woman with locks of hair standing out like cactus-spines around her neck and ears, and with two seats full of kids and every blame one raising a different brand of commotion; the young person that ambles up and down the aisle frequent and is always feeling the back of her belt, and the four-eyed old party with newspapers drifted around him—didn't I say I've tasted civilization? But there was one or two parties in Spoon Coulée that night that my absent reading didn't focus—as I'm about to relate.

All that night the wind ripped over the land and pushed tons of snow ahead like it was feathers. I could tell by the sound that all the storms we'd had before wasn't a commencement to this little session. In the morning I had the proof—or Hel did. It was his turn outside, and he had to shovel every inch from the shack to the stable. The snow was piled solid as sand almost, and high as your head. For once I was plumb willing to wash the dishes and sweep the floor.

After breakfast the sun come out, and it was as pretty a morning as you'd want to see anywhere, and still. Of course, there wasn't no more damage the wind could do, so you couldn't blame it for taking a lay-off and smiling over the results.

I done up the work thorough, put a pot of beans on to boil, and borrowed

Hel's skis for a little recreation of my own. Hel didn't need 'em: he was still shoveling snow and saying things in his own tongue. I slid my toes in and started down toward the train that was bogged down so solid in drifts you'd think nothing but June rains would ever get her loose. It was good going—for snow-shoes—and I disported myself around that coulée and slid down the slopes joyous as a bunch of antelopes, till Hel yelled words at me that signified he meant to say the beans was burning. So I took one last scoot down toward the shack, got going so fast I sailed past Hel like a bird, and on down to within ten feet of the train. A girl was looking out of a window, and she smiled on me real pretty. I waved my hand at her coquettish, got myself stopped before I run plumb over 'em, and went back to tend to the beans, which was smoking blue when I got to 'em.

I was just grinding coffee for dinner when a knock come on the door. "Come a-running," I invites loud, so that they could hear me over and above the song of the coffee-mill; and in walks a girl—*two* girls. I will own straight up I was some surprised, and for a minute I just set there with my mouth open and plumb forgot to be polite.

The girl in the lead sized up me and the shack with one or two good quick looks, and then she smiled; and I savvied it was the girl I'd flagged at the train.

"Oh, isn't—isn't your wife in?" she asked innocent—a little too *blame* innocent. "We——"

"No, ma'am, she ain't," I answers mild. "She's out shoveling snow so she can feed the horses. Have a chair?" There wasn't any, rightly speaking; there was some boxes, though, and she come in and set down on one and sized up me and the shack again. The other one stood close to the door, like she wanted it handy if she might want to hit the trail. I recognized the attitude, all right, for I've been there somewhat myself.

"What a funny place!" says the first

one. "Is it a cowboy camp, and are you a cowboy?"

"Yes, ma'am," I confesses. But I want to say right here that "ma'am" and "sir" are two words strange to my lips. I just said it to her for a josh, and to see what the dickens she was up to. I kinda suspected she thought I was a Western curio that she could knock a chip off and label "*Specimen of cowboy common to the soil of Montana, collected,*" etc., and take back home to show her admiring friends. She acted that way. I went right on grinding coffee, and when it was done I proceeded with my household labors as graceful as I knew how with them two strange females watching me open and interested.

"What luck that the train stopped right beside a real cowboy camp!" she says. "I've read about them; I just *love* Western stories. Do you *really* do all the cooking, and let your wife work outside? I didn't know cowboys ever had wives."

"It was a man," says the other one like she was saying over the multiplication-table. "I heard him swearing. It isn't his wife."

"But he said it was his wife. He wouldn't say a man was his wife, would he? He doesn't look as if he would tell lies. I'm going to ask him if he ever killed a man. Hasn't he got nice eyes? And I do love the way his hair curls on his temples. And his hands are so white! I wonder if he ever *did* shoot a man."

Now, what do you think of that? She said it in French, thinking, I guess, that I wouldn't savvy; but I didn't winter once with a Simon-pure French Canuck for nothing. And I will say that she murdered the language almost as bad as Helga does English. Still, I savvied what she said, all right. And think of me slicing bacon innocent and without guile, the while that fluent lady discoursed enthusiastic on the color of my limpid eyes, and my capacity for murder!

"He's too tall," says the other one, who wasn't any sawed-off herself. "I

hate to see a man so tall. And his shoulders set out square from his neck like a druggist's bottle."

Now, what do you think of that? And me always inclined to be chesty over my long legs and the set of my shoulders.

"I'm going to make him ask us to lunch," says the fluent one. "It will be such fun! Fancy how they will stare, at home, when I tell them." And she did, all right.

As you may guess, I took the hint when she remarked in English how good the coffee smelt, and I turned around and asks them would they like me to put plates on for them? The fluent one smiled at me sweet and gurgled, "How good of you! We will be delighted!" So I set on two extra pie-tins that we used for plates, and cleaned the butcher-knife. That shack wasn't furnished for unexpected guests, but I didn't make no apologies, for I savvied that the cruder we was the better story the fluent lady could frame up for her friends, and I was willing and anxious to please.

"You promised the fellow with the red mustache you'd go to lunch with him," says the other one in French; but it didn't have no effect, for the fluent lady was discoursing amiable with me and finding out heaps in my past career that I hadn't never suspicioned till she asked me. I'd owned up to three stage hold-ups and five fatal gun-fights, and was just confessing to shooting up Butte and putting the whole town into their cellars for two days and nights, when Hel come in and created a diversion by stubbing his toe on the coal-bucket and near standing on his head. He was some astonished at the company I was keeping, which accounts for his uncertain footing.

We set down to dinner, the ladies with their wraps on like it was a restaurant, and Hel trying hard to keep his teeth covered and breaking forth continual in a smile like the sun after a storm. I don't know when I ever enjoyed myself more in the same space of time, and I sure tried to live up to their expectations, though Hel's blamed

lack of the sense of seeing a joke come near queering my play once or twice.

Anyway, my joy died sudden and hard. The fluent lady's fellow with the red mustache, that she'd promised to eat lunch with, butted into the game just when I was putting the trimmings on an Indian fight that took place in that same coulée just before Thanksgiving. I mind I was telling it scary and trodding on Hel's feet to keep him from saying it wasn't so, when the fellow opened the door and walked in unceremonious. And when I seen him I stopped short off in my thrilling experiences and hoped to Heaven he wouldn't know me. My reason was that he was the same fool deputy sheriff that had made me hard to catch the winter before, and had been camping on my trail more or less constant ever since.

Well, I hated to pull a gun before the ladies, much as I'd prepared 'em for such proceedings; and anyway, I didn't have it on me. But Mr. Deputy hadn't no such compunctions, and drewed his without asking to be excused. "Jack Bellamy, you're my prisoner," he roars at me real fierce. "Miss Martin, lunch is ready over in the diner, and the company is more respectable than it is here."

The fluent lady looked at me like I was tagged "Dargerous." "Is he really a desperado?" she asked the deputy, and went over and stood beside him and looked scared.

"I thought all along he wasn't safe," said the other one, and she said it in English.

I won't prolong the agony. The deputy marched me ahead of him to the train, and Hel stood and looked at me and grinned painful. He was sorry, but he couldn't do nothing. So was I, if you want to know. The idea of being locked into a small place and not being free to get out and face the wind and sun when I want to always did give me the shivers. I believe I'd die if I was penned up anywhere. So I wasn't what you could call real cheerful over the accident, and I wasn't thinking any nice things about women, either. A woman had queered me with the law in

the first place, and here was a couple of 'em causing me a heap more trouble—and me not harming 'em in any way, neither. It didn't look to me like a square deal.

I was took into the smoker and hobbled to a seat, and everybody fell over themselves to get a look at me. Lord! you'd think I was a royal bangled tiger, and a man-eating one, at that. But I will say that there was a lot of excuse for the bunch. The way that deputy sheriff threw it into them about me being a rip-snorting outlaw would make a man sick to listen to. I ain't any saint, but there wasn't any call to lie about it. Why, you'd think hell was way above where I belonged, before he got through.

The conductor come along and had a look at me—and as luck would have it, I used to know him when he wasn't no railroader but a plain stock-hand. He remembered me, too, though he didn't let on; I seen from the look of his eyes that he knew me all right and didn't swallow all he was hearing. Still, at the same time, I wasn't banking none on the acquaintance.

He made a remark about the way I was staked out to the seat, and kinda laughed at the deputy, who tapped his six-gun and looked fierce, and got off that old saying that "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." That made me sore.

"You won't even have no birds in the bushes, old-timer, by the time I'm through with you," I breaks in. But I didn't mean nothing only to ease up my mind some. The conductor looks at me again and grins, and then goes out of the car, and after a while the crowd thins down till there wasn't but two or three left. They was running short on coal, it seemed, and they had to keep it warm where there was women and children. So along in the afternoon it got so you could see your breath in the smoker, and the place wasn't popular no more. Pretty soon there wasn't nobody left but me and the deputy, and he was getting uneasy. I don't know why he hung to the smoker, unless it was on account of the fluent lady and

him being afraid she might waste a little sympathy on me, or something like that. At the same time, I don't pretend to know what does take the place of ideas in heads like his, so I don't know what he thought. I know it commenced to get almighty cold in there.

The conductor come along again and told Plummer—that was the deputy's name, I found out—that he'd better move. They was going to just keep two coaches warm, he said, and if help didn't come pretty soon they wouldn't be able to do that. "Unhobble this poor devil and put him back in a warm coach," he says. "You act like he was the whole Jesse James gang come back. He ain't goin' to murder yuh if yuh turn his legs loose."

The deputy didn't have no good excuse for not doing it, so he unlocks my leg from the seat and tells me to march ahead of him, and gets out his gun. I guess I needn't take much time to explain that I marched, all right. The conductor was ahead of me, so I moseyed along meek as anything, through two day-coaches that was empty and into one where the folks was all congregated together to keep from freezing. It was cold, all right, and the sun was thinking about going to bed pretty quick. It made me homesick.

I saw the fluent lady and the other one setting there giving me the bad-eye, along with the rest of the bunch. Such a lot of rubber-necks it was never my fate to see before. Also, I took notice that this coach was all trimmed up with looking-glasses, so you could see all around you.

It didn't take me an hour to get a line on the man behind, let me tell you. He was looking over toward the fluent lady triumphant, and his gun wasn't pointing at me as straight as I'd imagined when I couldn't see. Say! do you want to know what I done? I let a squawk out of me that would have made a bunch of Indians die of jealousy, and fell backward onto Mr. Deputy so quick he didn't know what hit him. He went down in a heap, but I was on top and ready for business by

the time the bullet had got loose from his gun.

The drummer in the check suit was there, all right; I know positive, because he got the bullet in his leg and took on something fierce. The rest was plumb gentle and tried to crawl under the seats. They'd heard hard things about Jack Bellamy, and so you couldn't rightly blame 'em. The conductor was the only one I was afraid of, and he was real obliging and let me get the drop on him with the sheriff's gun before he done anything to spoil my play. He didn't used to be that kind, neither, as a general thing.

After that it was pickings. I got up, let another yell just to put the fear of the Lord into the passengers, lifted the deputy on the toe of my boot and told him to amble along in front of me to the shack, where I'd like to have a few words in private. Then I warned the bunch that I was a bad man and not to be handled safe, and they sure believed it and didn't buy into the game. So we left the car without any further annoyance in the shape of gun-smoke and flying lead, and I hikes Plummer up to the shack. He went like a pet sheep.

Hel was setting by the stove dejected, smoking a pipe and burning his boots till the shack reeked of the smell. When he seen us come in, and me behind with the gun ready for action, his eyes was the size of pie-plates. He grinned, though; poor devil, he couldn't help it.

"I'm an officer of the law, and I command you to help me——" begins the deputy to Hel.

"Can you *snockky Norske*?" I interrupts before Hel can get his lips close enough together to say anything. "Because if you can't, don't try to do business with my smiling pardner. He's deaf and dumb, and likewise he can't talk English." Then I made horrible faces at Hel to make him get next before summer came. Hel's a good fellow, but his think-works are rusty and can't move off a walk.

Anyway, I had the drop on 'em both, so I wasn't worrying any; and I didn't

believe any of the brave souls on the train would come up to the shack. I sent the deputy over to stand facing the other wall and got what things I had to have together. I didn't know just exactly how I was going to make my getaway, I'd been too occupied to study over it. Then Hel come alive.

"*Ska du go po shee?*" he says, and looks at me innocent.

"You bet your sweet life!" I told him. I didn't dare to say anything more, for fear the deputy would take it out of Hel afterward for giving me good advice. As it stood, he didn't savvy Scandahoovian, and so he didn't know Hel had offered me the snowshoes, which I hadn't thought of before. I'd had a kinda hazy idea of getting away on horseback, like I'd been used to, and feeling sorry for the cayuse that had to buck them drifts.

I rammed a chunk of bacon and a package of coffee into my pocket, and ordered Hel in horrible Swede to do me up some salt and matches and sugar. Antelopes is plenty in that part of the State, and it's against the law to kill 'em. But I had it coming to me anyway, and shooting antelope ain't a hanging crime, so I counted on fresh meat if I stayed out long enough to need it.

When I was ready to start the sun had just dipped behind the west wall of the coulée; so you can tell by that I made quick work of it. I drove that deputy sheriff outdoors and slipped my toes under tee ski straps, and hazed him up the hill ahead of me, toward the brightest red in the sky. I remember it was a mighty pretty sunset. I thought then, and I still think that Mr. Plummer was scared good and plenty—and it sure amuses me, because I never hurt a man permanent in my life, up to then and some past. I wasn't telling him that, though, you can bet.

He plugged along laborious and reluctant, and I wouldn't be surprised if he was doing some tall guessing, along about that time. I didn't elucidate what horrible death I meant him to die, but poked him in the spine occasional with my balance-pole, when he got to lag-

ging too much. Once I looked back, and there was groups of humans all along down by the coaches, watching the terrible scene with bated breath—so to speak. I was sure sore at me having to hike out from the comforts of a warm shack and plenty of grub, and take to the high divides in weather like that was. And I wasn't none in love with them two female girls that got me into this fix; but at the same time, I had to laugh to myself at the way that smart officer of the law was heading toward the sunset with his desperado prisoner at his heels, and all them gillies down below watching for the tragic wind-up. Lord! with a man as bad as I'd been painted to them, there's no telling what awful sight they expected to see. And right there is where I resolved a lot that I'd try and furnish 'em with a spectacle they could tell about when they got home.

At the top I orders him to stop, and he done so. He was plumb meek by that time, and ready to do most anything I said.

"Mr. Plummer," I said to him, "a while back you was bragging a lot about having me on your rope, and you named over an old saying about a bird in the hand. I want to say that being a bird in the hand has got its drawbacks, and from now on and forever I aim to be the two birds in the bushes. Mr. Plummer," I says stern, "lay down!"

He done so immediate.

"Mr. Plummer," I remarks, getting off the skis and standing over him threatening, "I ought to kill you, but I'm afraid the fluent lady down below

might weep for you. I'm going to send you back to her with my compliments."

I got on the up-hill side and give him a poke vigorous with my foot, and he started off beautiful. Did you ever roll down-hill in a barrel when you was a kid? Mr. Plummer had the hill, but he didn't have no barrel. Still, at the same time, he was a nice, round build, and he went beautiful. It was a long slope, the same one I slid down when I went to tend to the beans that forenoon, and I knew for sure he'd reach his train all right before he stopped.

The coulée below was filling up with purple shadows, and the ridges was stained red like blood on the snow, and the sky was as pretty as I ever saw in my life, and I've seen a good many. I can see it yet, and him a black ball rolling down to the snowed-in train. He didn't look to me heroic. When he was started good I emptied the shells out of his six-shooter and sent it skidding down after him. I ain't a thief; and besides, I had my own buckled on me.

I saw him pick himself up, stand a second and go in a heap again. And I heard 'em holler and laugh, down there. I'll gamble his head spun like a top. Somebody give me the high-ball; I took it to be the conductor, that might have stalled me at the start but didn't. I waved, and got onto the skis. It was a good long jaunt to the line, and I'd got to reach timber before I could camp that night.

The moon was just peeking over the ridge when I turned and headed north. Then, as the story-writers say, my manly form melted into the gloom.



SPIDER-WEB FISHING-NETS

THE natives of New Guinea employ extraordinary fishing-nets of spider's webs to capture fish weighing up to a pound. They fix bamboos bent in the shape of a landing-handle in the jungle glades, and the spiders weave their nets all over the frames. The method of fishing is to watch for a passing fish, and then to dip it out and throw it on dry land.

The White Veil of Mystery

By T. Jenkins Hains

Author of "*The Turn of the Tide*," "*The Black Barque*," Etc.

More strenuous adventures of Cap'n Blye, yachtsman, Bahama Bill, and others, both with man and the elements. Tells of the coming of two ships to a strange rock in the ocean.



THAT'S Porto Bello, there, inside dem hills, in de slue between dem mountings," said Bahama Bill. "Yo' says yo' cayn't go in?" "No, we had a bit of trouble over those square-heads," said Captain Blye of the big sloop-yacht *Seagull*.

His old mate, Gunton, or Gunting as they called him, an old wind-jammer who had sailed with Blye before he had made his pile and gone yachting, stood looking at the high hills and smiled with such a knowing look that the big diver, Bahama Bill, understood.

"Ah, I sees, yo' must 'a' had dem jump de ship—well, we don't want toe git nothin' but water, but if yo' alls kin stand a bit o' dryness, I reckon I kin stan' it too."

The *Seagull* had stood out from Colon under a libel, and she was not to be run into ports where she was known. She had gone into the diving and wrecking business and was no longer a pleasure-craft.

"I reckon we'll shove her down the beach," said Blye, "only the glass is surely bad for this time of year; and as for the sun, there don't seem to be any such thing. Boil the rain-water and lets get along."

"Dar's good chance fo' divin' work at Rio," said Bill. "'N' ef we make it we kin paint her up so nobody'll know

her, an' I reckon you kin fix de papers, cap'n."

They held the yacht offshore, running easterly with the light northerly wind upon her port beam. With the men, Hacksaw Johnson, a master, and Peters, a former coaster, they had, with the galley outfit, including Jack Wyatt, a crew capable of taking the little ship anywhere she would float. For from Blye down through Gunton, Bahama Bill and the rest, they were the very pick of sailormen. The giant black diver was equal to six ordinary men when it came to hauling upon a line or heaving upon a winch—and he had been mate of a wrecker. Johnson and Blye were master navigators, and Peters and Gunton were equal to the best mates found upon deep water. The peculiar set of circumstances which had thrown these men together made them feel that they were more or less partners in any venture. Johnson and Peters were forced out of their own country for circumstances which they had seemed to have been unable to avert, and the two were absolutely in each other's confidence. The big diver who had joined the ship at Colon was always ready for adventure, always longing for the dangers of the submarine; and ethical questions never bothered him at all.

If the men he went with were all right from his point of view, he would stick to them, fight for them, and stand

by to the last. It was his code, a code built upon the faithfulness of men who had known danger, and who had never shirked it or shifted it upon their shipmates for personal gain. Blye had a keen idea that he could make plenty of money with his outfit after certain financial complications were settled. And although he had made a bad start in business, for he was first of all a sailor, he felt that he would make good in the end and save his vessel to recoup the shattered fortune which he had invested so badly.

About the time they were running along the northern coast of South America, the great coaster, *Admiral*, Captain Gales, cleared from Venezuelan ports and started for Rio for orders. Gales expected to carry up a miscellaneous cargo, or failing in that, one of hides and bone, the most hated of all for sailing-vessels. Gales had waited long and patiently for Johnson and Peters, who had shipped with him, to return, hoping they would risk the voyage back to the States. But as the time for his departure drew near, he knew his men would never show up.

The boy he had shipped from school, Jack Wyatt, he had an especial interest in. This lad, he felt, had no business with the men, and he wondered how he had been led astray to such an extent as to go with them. Jack had been at his house, been known to him through his own children, and he had shipped him for the simple reason the boy insisted on going to sea and not going to school. The school would have expelled him, anyhow. He knew that, but he still felt a keen responsibility in the lad; and for this reason he spent some money and time trying to locate his "jumpers." When he read of the sloop *Seagull* and the affair of the counterfeits at Colon, he was pretty sure from the descriptions that both his men were with her. Blye he had never known nor heard of and the business of diving or wrecking he took but a casual interest in.

The *Admiral* was a six-masted schooner of the most modern type, and

it was his business to carry coals or lumber to and from the Northern United States ports to those of South and Central America. Gales shipped two stranded seamen from Colon and put to sea. Although he carried no passengers, he had shipped a remarkably good-looking woman as stewardess; and as he was a married man and most chivalric to all women, he felt that no evil could come from mixed sexes on the short runs. The stewardess had her own room in the forward cabin and she never came in contact with the crew, meeting only the ship's officers at mess, and working under the direction of the old steward.

At sea Gales was a bluff, hearty old seaman; on shore he was somewhat petulant and much given to enjoying a fracas. He was accounted a good navigator, and owned three-eighths in the ship he commanded, following the modern rule and making his living out of her. As a first-class modern ship she had paid well, netting twenty per cent. during her few years of service; but being wooded, and consequently short-lived, Gales was doing his best to get what he could out of her before her time was up.

The weather had been very peculiar for some days after leaving port, and the sun had never shone at all. This was remarkable, for in this latitude the sun was the one thing a seaman could rely upon to burn furiously overhead during noontime. There was no chance to get the sun at all, and although both the *Admiral* and the *Seagull* were steering a course that changed their latitude but little, they had no chance to make a departure along the parallel. And besides this, they were exposed to a strong current, which was not well-known, and which changed constantly with the seasons, setting them out of their course at the rate of several knots daily. Being close to the line they held along, knowing that they would probably not get anything much in the way of trades unless they made northing and easting. Consequently they held off the coast, and for days they went along without knowing where they were.

The peculiar haze which had at first obscured the zenith daily now seemed to grow heavier and settle upon the sea more like a fog. The wind died away to a light breeze, and the glass began to fall rapidly, telling of a disturbance which was far-reaching and dangerous.

It was the hurricane-season in the West Indies, and although Blye knew he had an able little vessel in the *Seagull*, she was a bit of a craft after all, only sixty feet on the water-line; and while she was heavy and powerful and drew plenty of water to stand up under a heavy blow, she was not the sort of vessel a seaman would pick out to weather out a cyclone. She was too small, too light for the frightful sea which runs with the squalls of the inner spirals of a cyclone. The glass was dropping fast and the weather was thickening up, and there was plenty of evidence that trouble was coming along in a different form from what they had met lately.

Aboard the *Admiral* the booms swung lazily with the throw of the swell, and even the boom-guys were put to it to hold them out when the swell began to set in from the southeast. Gales took in his topsails fore and aft, although there was no wind to speak of; he wallowed along to the eastward under his lower canvas. Not a sight of the sun had there been for days, and both vessels were a hundred miles out of their courses with the set of the current. There was no help for it, for it is absolutely essential to get a sight upon some celestial body when out of sight of land in order to know a ship's whereabouts. Soundings were too deep, they had kept too far offshore.

Off the northern coast of South America the bottom of the ocean is volcanic. It forms peaks and valleys of colossal magnitude, some of them—as in the case of the St. Paul's Rock—rising from the tremendous depth of two thousand fathoms. Off the northern coast of Brazil rises a peculiar peak, which evidently was the top of a submarine volcano, but which never quite reached the surface.

It came within the coral zone, a few

hundred fathoms, and built up through the ages, until finally the white rim rose clear of the sea circling the peak and forming a ring of coral rock. This broke the sea upon its sides, and for countless centuries the white coral broke up and formed, until at last a strip of solid land several hundred feet wide formed the ring. Upon this a few stray seeds found their way, and out of the many attempts three grew and rose above the reef into full-grown palms. To the westward a small opening showed where the coral failed to complete the circle above the water-mark.

The place being more than one hundred miles from land and isolated in the ocean, it was a most desolate rock—a little circular ring of coral rock not over half a mile across, with deep water inside the reef and the equatorial ocean rolling many thousand fathoms deep outside of it. It was well out of the track of ships, and not often visited. It is marked upon many charts as the Rocas, and at one time the English placed a flagpole upon its northern edge. The place is so desolate, so low—the highest point being not more than a fathom above high-water—that it is even less known than St. Paul's, which, lying as it does nearer the equator and in the path of ships, is frequently sighted. The roar of the southern ocean is the only sound that breaks the solitude, save perhaps the cry of some wandering gull; so in the darkness mariners give it a wide berth, for the current about it is varying and strong. No light greets the sailor as it does upon many of the desolate Bahama group. No nation has thought it worthy of the expense, lying as it does too far away from the regular lanes of traffic. It is simply to be avoided, not run for to pass.

Captain Blye of the *Seagull* knew of the Rocas, but thought the place was miles from his course, running as he intended close along the coast. Had he seen the sun he would have quickly set his ship's head two full points to the southward when the glass fell to twenty-nine—the danger-point, indicating cyclonic disturbance.

"I reckon you can take in the jib and roll it up snug—pass extra gaskets along that bowsprit and see them anchors lashed fast," said Gunton to his men, who were only waiting for the word.

"'N' I reckon we might as well close-reef dat mains'l—aye, cap?" said Bahama Bill, suggesting work after his fashion, without any relaxing of discipline. The mainsail was close-reefed, and everything was made as snug as possible for the fracas which seemed only too inevitable in the near future. The foglike haze deepened toward afternoon, and the heat was most oppressive. About two o'clock the sun shone like a ball of brass, and Blye was upon the point of hurrying for his sextant when Bahama Bill pointed to the southeast.

"She's comin', cap, dis time—look at de sea b'ilin'," said the diver. A faint murmur drifted over the ocean, and before any one could tell just where it came from a white line of foam showed on the starboard bow; the sun darkened instantly, as if it had suddenly gone out. Upon the ocean a deep gloom settled, and under the pall the low roar of the wind sounded, growing louder each moment.

"Hardup the wheel, Johnson," said Blye quietly; and that seaman was already rolling the spokes, while Bahama Bill and Gunton lowered down the mainsail and passed some gaskets over it. Peters and Jack hauled the forestaysail well in, and tried to aid the ship in paying off just as the first puff of wind, cool and whirling, struck the sail and filled it taut. The next instant the full weight of the squalls swept over them, and with a wild roar the hurricane burst fair upon the starboard beam. The force of the wind was terrific within five minutes, and each succeeding squall increased in violence. The puffs came faster and furious, and the little ship bore over until her port-rail was two feet beneath the swirl, and all hands were clinging for their lives to whatever they could grasp.

Johnson, holding the wheel hard up and clinging with all his strength to the

wheel-shaft, did all a man could to swing the ship before it. Peters and Jack cleared the parting staysail sheet-rope, and grasped the five-rail to hold on. Bahama Bill somehow crawled to the companion and closed the slide, shutting off the flying sea and drift from below, while each moment looked as if it was the last for the sloop.

Clinging half-drowned under the short bulwarks, with the sea flying over them, the rest waited, while Johnson clung grimly to the wheel-spokes. The force of the wind was so terrific that no other sound save the thunderous roar could be heard. Blye waved his hand to Johnson in desperation, to encourage him; but that steady old seaman kept his eyes fixed upon the lubber-line just under his nose, and watched with spray-filled eyes for the hoped-for swing-off.

She was a stanch little vessel, and it seemed only fair to hope she would straighten out soon. Suddenly the sea, which had been beaten out flat with the blasts of the squalls, began to lift. The giant sea of the hurricane began to show itself, crossing the swell which had been running hours earlier and making a peculiarly ragged sea, a sea which swung with the rush and force of the terrific pressure behind it. A huge hill of water hurled itself upon the *Seagull*, and bursting over her smothered her, drowning her completely. She was laid out flat, her cross-trees in the water, and the combing rush of foam swept over her, apparently blotting her out of existence.

Under the whirl the men clung, choking, gasping, with Johnson still clinging gamely to the wheel, trying to get off before it. The forestaysail had gone to ribbons at the first real burst of the advancing squalls, but the ragged strips of canvas still held upon the stay and exerted a wonderful power, pulling in the right direction. With the stroke of a mighty sea upon the bow, the higher freeboard took it kindly and off went the ship's head half a point. Another sea and she was going.

Then a huge hill lifted her along and she was whirling off into the gloom of the hurricane, with Johnson still

holding the wheel-spokes. The men dragged themselves clear of the water and took a breath. Bahama Bill crawled to the wheel and seized the lee-spokes in his mighty hands. Not a word was spoken. The men knew.

"Dead before it," bawled Blye, holding to the rail close at hand. The wind whipped the words into space. It was just habit of order, just the natural expression of the master. The rest crawled to shelter and made every opening tight.

II.

The *Admiral* was rolling, wallowing and switching mightily into an awful cross-swell. The sea was oily, only wrinkled here and there with small drifting airs which caused patches of dark color upon the dull surface, where it could be seen under the haze. The foglike mist settled down closer and the air grew more humid, making even Gales fret under the low pressure. Big Johnson, the square-head who had managed, with Andersen, to get passage in the schooner, under the consul's advice, from Porto Bello, was sent out upon the jib-boom-end to make the outer sails secure and pass extra gaskets over the cloth. Gales knew what was coming along, and took no chances with his canvas. His topsails had already been furled, and his spanker, jigger and driver rolled up, leaving only the fore, main and mizzen upon the huge fabric whose six masts seemed like a small forest rolling about upon the disturbed sea.

The great ship being very light, rose upon the swells and rolled so that it was difficult to stand. Johnson clung to the outer stays and looked for a moment toward the east. He saw the glint of canvas through the pall, something that looked like a sail. Then the gloom shut in deeper, and he had just passed the hitch over the jibtop-sail when he heard the menacing murmur of the hurricane. He bawled out to the men on deck and the word was passed aft, where Gales and his chief mate were standing.

"Wind comin' from the east'ard, sir," came the cry, and instantly the wheel was rolled up and the schooner began to pay off to get the weight of it before hauling up, for the glass was too low to permit of risking facing it close-hauled without ballast.

Gales had plenty of sea-room to the northwest, and swung his ship slowly, intending to come to on the starboard tack at the risk of working into the hurricane if the wind did not overblow him. In a moment he was stretched out on his beam-ends, and the huge vessel was sliding sideways over the whitened sea. She drove to leeward bodily for fifteen minutes, before Gales decided to get some after-canvas upon her and haul her up. The foresail, mainsail and mizzen had been blown out of the bolt-ropes at the first rush of the heavier squalls. The ribbons streamed away to leeward, and flicked and flew off piece by piece.

"She won't run—won't pay off—off," bawled Gales into the ear of the mate, "have to heave her—heave her—to," he yelled, the words broken and drowned in the roar. "Get—tarpaulin—driver riggin'—yes, driver—all hands—get it stretched—up and down—up and down—spread it out—rigging behind it—hold all right," and he headed the mate for the lazarette.

He hoped to get something on her to swing her head to the seas, which would soon sweep over and founder him if he laid upon his port bilge. The vessel was too light to pay off, too light to work anyway with certainty. But he knew her, and knew her habit of luffing to under after-sail, and he hoped to take advantage of it and get her straightened out in time. Johnson, who had been out upon the jib-boom-end, found himself unable to get back to deck. He was pressed in upon the spar and the careening ship shortened the foot-ropes so that he could not follow them. Instead of getting down upon the canvas and pulling himself along clinging to the spar, he became panic-stricken in the roar, and clung desperately to the foretopmast-stay, finally passing a lashing about his

body to keep from being blown out and away to leeward.

While they worked the ship as best they could, trying to get after-cloth upon her, the squalls suddenly increased in violence and rapidity. They came fast and furious, like discharges from some mighty cannon, roaring, rushing and sweeping over the laboring ship. Gales noticed it first, and pulled himself to the binnacle to peer in; for he knew the meaning of the rush. Yes, he was taking them farther aft already, the wind was shifting rapidly, and they had only been in the hurricane less than half an hour.

Then the wind began to die away suddenly, squalls came and went with longer intervals between—and then came a quick calm, a dull, heavy air laden with moisture. It was dark, almost as dark as evening. The sea leaped and tore, combing into strange shapes, sometimes rushing as though the force of the universe was behind it; and then, a sudden cross-swell meeting it, the whole would rush and tumble, mounting into strange peaks and reaching to the decks of the *Admiral*, which now rose back to her bearings, and plunged and bucked wildly.

"We'll run her," bawled Gales, "the next will come nor'west true—never mind the tarpaulin, get some good stuff on her for'a'd—bend a trysail on the fore, and get the forestaysail loose—good thing we had that bit of rag rolled up—jib lasted about five seconds."

And while they worked the southern quadrant of the hurricane drew near, coming with the wind from the north-west. The hurricane was of appalling force, and evidently small in spiral; for it was at its beginning and by the time it reached Cuba would be ten times as wide.

It struck the *Admiral* after fifteen minutes of dead calm, fifteen precious minutes while the crew worked and the donkey-man got his fires going again under his boilers—for the *Admiral*, like all the modern ships of her class, worked everything with the winches. Gales felt the first puff and managed to get his ship straightened out before

it. Then it came with the usual rush and swept her along with its fury, the bit of forestaysail slacked out and pulling her head straight to the eastward.

Johnson had come in from the jibboom, and all hands—there were only eight men besides the engineer forward—made their way aft under orders to stand by to lend a hand if there was an accident. The huge, light fabric had every chance now of running clear, for there was no sea that would bother her to any extent, nothing could poop her; and only bad steering might broach her or get her by the lee. Away she swept to the eastward, and Gales knew nothing of his whereabouts.

It was now late—after dark—and the night was growing thicker, black as the inside of a pot. Between the squalls the men tried to see a few fathoms from the ship, but the only thing that was visible in the black turmoil was the white patches of the combers close aboard. The *Admiral* tore along sixteen knots an hour, under nothing but a bit of rag forward; and as the night passed she had run many miles. Daylight found her still tearing across a wild sea, which was steel and white under the pall of the scud. The wind was slackening fast, but the sea was appalling, and there was still wind enough in the squalls to prevent Gales from getting more cloth upon her. On and on for two more days and nights he tore. He longed for a sight of the sun, just one glimpse to get an idea of his whereabouts; but the heavy scud still flew in solid masses overhead, and shut off all save a dull gray light.

"Don't like running her so long without knowing something," said Gales to the mate. "We've made more'n a thousand miles easting without a sight—don't like it—we'll heave her up at four bells. Let the men get something to eat, and stand by for getting after-canvas on her."

III.

The *Seagull* ran wildly before the storm. Bahama Bill and Johnson at the wheel, trying to hold her dead before it, had all they could do. She

would race upon the tops of the seas, and getting upon the forward slope would run with the send at a sharp angle, always in danger of getting ahead into the trough and going under. Then she would get the lift under her, and it would race forward, letting her climb the incline ahead at a slower rate of speed, until she sank back into the trough, where the blasts of the squalls were not so heavy. But always there was the danger of the combing crests smothering her, always the danger of her luffing to and taking them over her side; or, swinging by the lee, get them to leeward and lose control.

In the roar and smother of the gale there was nothing to do but hold on and watch. It was dead before it, no matter what the course; and as Blye had not known his whereabouts for several days except by working his traverse-tables and figuring dead-reckoning, he had failed to allow for the great current which sets along the coast and which is not charted.

All night they ran her safely, Gunton and Peters relieving the two at the wheel. By daylight they had passed out of the worst of it. The sea was still tremendous, but the squalls were slacking up in steady blowing, their viciousness dying away. The scud showed breaks in it, and the gray sea began to get a more regular sweep. They still drove on, and the days passed without any smoothing out of the running hill behind them. In the dim light of the dawn of the third day, Blye was straining his eyes ahead trying to see the horizon, for all night they had run without being able to see a ship's-length ahead. As she lifted upon the crest of a hill, Blye saw something right ahead and close aboard.

At the same instant Bahama Bill rolled the wheel hard down without waiting for orders, and the *Seagull* came to under the crest of a mighty sea whose top rose clear and green, letting the dim light through. It fell upon the little ship like an avalanche. Over her a fathom deep it tore, smothering her down and laying her flat, the men clinging for life and being dragged un-

der, pulled and smashed. Then she rose staggering out of the smother and shook herself slowly free.

Bahama Bill was still clinging to the wheel. Johnson was lying limp and insensible, fast to the life-line he had tied about his waist. Gunton and Peters were gone, gone out, washed into eternity, disappearing forever as they were wiped out. Blye, fast to a life-line, gasped for breath; and while he struggled he heard the choking yell of the big black diver: "Surf toe lar'ard—git de mains'l on her, fo' Gawd's sake."

Jack Wyatt, clinging to the bulkhead below, had seen the light die away and felt the thunderous shock as the sea fell over the ship. He had been forced to remain below as he was of no use on deck; but with the heaving of the ship into the wind he was sure the end was at hand. He could not stay below to be drowned like a rat in a hole. He tore the door of the companion loose, and scrambled on deck just as another sea boarded the yacht and swept her. He landed in the arms of Captain Blye, who held him firmly until the water ran off again. Blye saw at once that it was no use to try to drive the ship, no use to try to make way in that sea and wind, except drifting before or driving before it. "Put the wheel hard up, and try to get her off—get her before it," he bawled to the big diver.

But Bahama Bill was not going to give up without a desperate effort. He saw that he would get little help putting canvas on the sloop from either Blye or Johnson. Slipping the wheel-spokes in a becket, he crawled forward himself and tried to get the peak of the mainsail raised when Blye should cast off the gaskets. Smothered in the seas, with Johnson so badly hurt he was of no use, the vessel was soon helpless in spite of the struggle.

A dull booming roar broke upon their ears; and Jack, climbing upon the cabin skylight to get clear of the water, saw a low, thin line showing through a veil of white, the spume from the mighty sea falling upon the coral reef. He had just time to call out, just time to realize the danger, when Blye gave up the at-

tempt to help get canvas on her. He gazed for an instant ahead and then crawled aft and rolled the wheel hard up, leaving Bahama Bill staring into the white veil to leeward, from which the roar sounded.

The little ship straightened out, gathered way upon the crest of a huge sea, and then rushed right into the line of bursting foam. Blye expected to feel the shock of the bottom, the rending smash and the smothering sea, but he held her straight, determined to drive her as high as he might before the end. Some of them might get in alive.

The *Seagull* rushed through the bursting water; it tore over her, swamped her, completely covered her, but there was no smash, no touch from underneath. Another sea fell upon her stern and washed Blye clear to the mast, where Bahama Bill grabbed him. Jack clung to the skylight bars and hung grimly on. In a few minutes the rushing water rolled roaring off on both sides. The sloop righted herself to an even keel, and before they realized what had happened she was floating in comparatively smooth water, the thunder of the surf behind her and land all about. She had gone over the barrier, through a depression in the ring of coral bank. She was now right in a pocket, a circular harbor, and upon the outside of the bank the southern ocean fell with a deafening roar and thunder. The white mist of spume broke in places, and the land showed everywhere on all sides.

"Git de anchor, cap, cut her loose," cried the black diver. "We's sho' right in a good place—Lord knows where."

Both anchors were let go with all the chain they had, but the *Seagull* still drifted across the choppy seas of the sheltered lagoon, driven by the gale. The land was close aboard to leeward before she brought up, swinging about and clearing the inner bank of the reef by a few fathoms. Johnson, who had been struck upon the head, arose from the now clear deck and staggered to his feet. Jack climbed down from the skylight and cast him adrift, the line having knotted behind his back. Then he

let the stout seaman lean upon him and they went below.

In a few minutes both Bahama Bill and Blye made their way aft. The gale was breaking up and they were safe—safe in a snug harbor, but where they hadn't the least idea. Blye started for the chart, and tried to figure it out. Then he gave it up and took his sextant and went on deck to wait to get a shot at the sun, for the pall now broke and showed signs of clearing long enough to get a sight.

"We sho' is in a queer place," observed Bahama Bill. "Where yo' thinks we is, cap?"

"Looks like we hit the Rocas," said Johnson, who had been long in the Cape trade before he had gotten into trouble. "Soon as my head lets' up a bit I'll call time for you—the chronometer is still going all right."

"That'd be about one hundred miles out of our course," said Blye. He didn't quite like the idea. It savored of bad navigation.

"We haven't had a sight for a long time, you know," said Johnson significantly. In a little while the three men and Jack went on deck to get the gear straightened out, for things had been badly smashed and washed about in the hurricane. It took them some time to even get the mainsail stowed snug again, for it was reefed and the gaskets had been washed away when Bahama Bill had tried to get some of it upon her to hold her off the shore.

The reefs were shaken out and new gaskets hunted out, the men taking their time now, for they were safe enough. Suddenly Johnson stopped in the work and gazed to windward through the veil of spume-drift which flew over them from the surf upon the barrier. They gazed in the direction, and all saw a form—a huge, black object looming right over the outer barrier.

"A ship—good Lord, a ship," said Blye.

"Running straight into the surf," said Johnson. "She's a goner—lost."

As they spoke the black hull came more plainly into view. Then it swung

suddenly broadside on, and they saw the six masts of a huge schooner with a bursting cloud of spray flying over her as she took the sea upon her beam. She struck the barrier, heeled until her masts lay out flat upon the sea and the spurting masses of spray blotted her out of sight again.

"An' dat's de end ob him," said Bahama Bill quietly.

The wreck showed again as the sea receded; and as the hours passed the sky lightened, and the black hull showed lying upon its side with the masts pointing toward the shore, the seas making a steady breach over her.

"Nothin' kin go through dat surf an' live," said Bill with finality, "an' dere ain't no use ob tryin' to help de poor devils abo'd. Ef we ain't too fur from lan' we sho' is in fo' good salvage—must be somethin' in her worth takin', hey?"

They watched her for some time, and their thoughts went to Gunton and Peters, whom they had lost. The depression of the tragedy came upon them with force after the struggle to save the ship was over, and they spoke of their shipmates while they gazed at the wreck. Johnson appeared most depressed. Peters had been his chum, his partner since leaving the *Admiral*, and his loss bore heavily upon him. He sat and gazed dumbly at the hull in the surf of the barrier, thinking over the past, the sad life of the poor fellow who had just passed out into the world of missing seamen. It was Jack who first recognized the hull in the breakers. "It's the schooner *Admiral*—it's old Gales," he said to Blye.

Blye had never seen the *Admiral*, nor had Bahama Bill, but the news brought Johnson out of his trance.

"If it's Gales, we've got to do something—we must try to pick some of them up—poor old fellow. We might get to leeward in the small boat and watch inside the surf—some of them might come ashore," he said.

"I don't mind tryin'," said Bahama Bill, "ef yo' think yo' kin row to windward wid me—let de cap'n steer—yaas, we might git some ob dem. 'N'

if de wind slacks up, I'll make a try fur a line. De sea is breakin' all ober dat reef—we got toe be mighty keerful—what yo' says, cap?"

Blye was willing. Jack was left in charge of the *Seagull*, with orders to give her more scope if she started to drag. But the squalls were easing fast, although the sea was still running just as heavy. The largest of the boats, which was not smashed in the fracas because of its being lashed bottom up to leeward of the skylights, was put overboard. The oars were gotten from below, and the three men dropped into her to row out to the inside of the white water where the surf was broken and rolled in lines of suds over the shallow coral bank. The seas within the lagoon were small and choppy, for there was little room for them to gain way in the small space, and the lift of the surf was completely broken.

Bahama Bill rowed with a mighty stroke; and Johnson, strong man as he was, found it difficult to keep even with him, although he had bow oar. Blye steered, and sat silently watching the sea, which shot high in the air in a white storm of flying water over the wrecked ship, completely hiding her at times. She was so badly listed they could not count her masts, and it was for this reason principally that Johnson failed to recognize her when she first went in. Her six sticks pointed shoreward; and as they drew closer they had no difficulty in seeing that she was a huge, six-masted vessel, light and with all her gear apparently intact.

She had struck the outer barrier; and, broaching to, had come broadside into the surf, pounding and smashing in with the drive of the huge sea. The wind and waves had a tremendous hold of her high sides, and she drove gradually higher and higher up to shallow water, where the seas no longer lifted her and dropped her with a crash, but simply rolled her and smashed her, striking her high sides and driving over her in a storm of flying water, until she appeared to be in a white cloud which spurted and dropped, rose and fell with the surge.

"We cayn't get toe close, cap—better keep well back o' dat inner line, fo' dere's a suah current settin' across de reef," said Bahama Bill, resting upon his oar and gazing at the schooner.

"There's men in the mizzen-rigging—high up near the futtocks," said Johnson. "If she don't roll over any farther they'll stick there for a time, anyway. I reckon we don't want to get out in the cut—better stay behind the dry bank until the sea goes down a bit."

Blye held the small boat close to the rush of foam that came across the submerged part of the reef, but kept close to the point, where the dry coral broke the seas completely. There was a current setting crossways along the bank, and the danger of getting caught and drawn into the surf was great. To leeward across the lagoon they could watch the *Seagull* riding at her anchors safely. Beyond her the other side of the ringlike isle showed higher, and three tall coconut-trees bent to leeward with the wind. There was no sea upon this side save what rolled around the circle; but this swell caused a surf that showed above the low, dry reef.

After waiting a while they saw the schooner begin to swing. She came slowly stern to the sea; and the figures of the men in the mizzen-rigging showed now and again under the storm of flying water.

"If she swings around those fellows will be washed out—they can't hang on when the seas strike them," said Blye. "Seems hard to sit here and watch them go—by God, I wish we could do something."

The big black diver watched the wreck for a few moments, as if thinking over a problem. Then he spoke.

"Ef yo' really think I ought toe do it, cap, I reckon I might take a try at dem. Dat ain't no fool swim through de surf. It'll be hell an' a bit mo' besides—what yo' says, cap?"

"Oh, no living man could swim that sea," said Blye. "God knows I would like you to go if I thought you could make it, but there's no use in losing you too. No, we can't spare you, Bill."

"S'pose we land inside de bank and

take a wade out toe windward. Wid de current setting down to'ard dem, I might make it—yo' nebber kin tell jest what it's like till yo' try. Pull yo' oar, Johnson; slue her around, cap; an' let's cross de reef and take a look, anyways."

They rowed farther along under the lee of the circular reef, to a point about a quarter of a mile south of the wreck, which was sheltered completely from both the wind and the sea. They hauled the small boat up and started across the barrier.

The reef was not very wide at this point, and only a few feet above the surf, the coral bank being entirely bare of vegetation and the broken pieces of rock looking very much like chunks of ordinary limestone. Bahama Bill, a natural-born reefer, strode ahead, crossed the barrier and looked northward at the wreck. The schooner was swinging—yes, there was no mistake about it, the men clinging to the rigging would soon be exposed to the weight of the sea striking upon them. Then they would quickly be swept away. Blye and Johnson followed him; they stopped, knee-deep in the surf. They had all been wet through for some time; and the warm water was not uncomfortable; less so than the wind, in fact. Suddenly Bill pulled off his jumper, loosed his belt and pulled off his trousers. He tossed the clothes to Johnson, and strode out into the roll of the surf.

"Come back, come back, don't try it," said Blye. But the big fellow was already waist-deep, and the next instant he dove under the rising rush of foam. When he appeared again his head was fifty feet distant, and the black wool upon it was all they saw. He was swimming, swimming out to do what he could, and would take his chance.

The seas were falling far to windward of him; the heaviest break was in five or six fathoms, and the great rush of lifting water rolled with a dull thunder of sound, a mighty avalanche. It seemed impossible that anything, even a fish, could go through the breaking crest and live. The diver cut slantwise through, keeping well to tideway of the

wreck, so that if he once reached the distance offshore he could easily drift down to her. He was a mighty swimmer. Years of diving and working in the warm waters of the Bahamas where he lived enabled him to take his ease and be as much at home in the sea as out of it. But that broken surge was a frightful thing to face, especially with a current setting along that would cut off all help from the beach, the coral bank where Blye and Johnson stood gazing after him.

The inner line of breakers, those which fell and rolled in less than a fathom and a half of water, he passed easily. He swam strongly, and never once looked back at the receding shore. His powerful strokes took him seaward in spite of the rush of foam, and he dived repeatedly under the rising crests as they bore down upon him. In fifteen minutes he had made the outer line of surf, and Blye and Johnson awoke to action.

"Let's get the boat to leeward to pick him up in case he comes in," said the captain, and they made their way back to the craft, getting her off and rowing to the northward, to the other side of the submerged bank. They could no longer see the diver. He had disappeared in the white cloud of spume which whirled across the surf with the stiff gale still blowing. The *Admiral* was still holding, but her position had changed greatly since they started out. The seas were now bursting heavily over her stern, but not quite reaching the rigging where the forms of the men still clung.

The send of the seas was evidently driving her higher and farther in, for they could see her more plainly than before. The white veil broke away in places, and they could even now and then note the wreck of her forward house, where the seas had smashed it to kindling. Her foremast had snapped off short at the partners, and it had taken the maintopmast with it. The jib-boom hung useless over the starboard bow, and the wreck of the bowsprit shrouds fell in a tangle beneath her cat-head.

Bahama Bill was having trouble while they gazed, but he was alone with it and he set his ugly jaws tight for the fracas. He found himself in the heavy water of the reef, where it was surging along and lifting in three or four fathoms. The tops of the huge seas stood up straight and towered above him, rising like a wall with the green light of the day shining through. Then they would suddenly fling high, burst and fall with a terrific roll and tumble, roaring shoreward in a mighty smother which tore along like an avalanche of snow. The first one of these big fellows he took with a deep dive, swimming down until the drag of the water let up. Then he rose into the boiling waste and endeavored to get air.

The swirling foam choked him considerably, but by great effort he managed to get his head clear enough to draw his breath. In a moment another sea burst over him and dragged him down to an intolerable depth, holding him in its swirl until he was forced to use all his strength to rise to the surface. He was being tried sorely. He looked at the wreck. It was still nearly a hundred fathoms distant, but he was almost abreast of it, and he knew it was in less than two fathoms. The current was setting toward her, and he swam easily between the seas, to save himself for the work of getting aboard.

Slowly he made his way out, slowly and with the knowledge he must get a hold upon the ship or be lost. He would get no help from Blye or Johnson. He must work it out himself, depending solely upon himself; and as he drew alongside the huge fabric with the sea bursting over her, he became more than aware that he had a desperate undertaking. It almost caused him to hesitate.

The huge seas bursting upon the schooner to windward made it certain death to attempt to try to board her from that quarter. To leeward lay a mighty tangle of broken planks, lines, steel rigging, ragged and sharp fragments, and they boiled and swung furiously with the swirl of the backwash. Through

this tangle of grinding chaos he must make his way to reach her; and as he drew near he saw the danger. To go back through the surf without a rest was hazardous. To attempt to board was like inviting death. Gales, hanging to the mizzen-rigging with his mate and big Johnson, the square-head sailor, saw the black head of the diver approaching and called out to him to keep off.

"Get back—you can't do us any good," bawled Gales. "Wait until the sea goes down."

But the roar of the surf drowned the voice; the diver kept slowly on, eying the floating stuff with an anxious look and wondering if he could make a passage through it. A large piece of wreckage came close to him, and a heavy sea raised it high above his head, then hurled it down upon him. He dove with the rapidity of a duck, and just missed getting struck. He came to the surface and found the wood to leeward. He swam to it with a few powerful strokes and seized it, drawing himself upon it so that he could rest between the seas.

Then he waited while it drove shoreward. He soon found he was making nothing by this practise, and he began to swim slowly back toward the schooner. He noticed that she was still working head-on to the beach; the seas were bursting over her stern more frequently. The figures still remained in the rigging; he saw they were alive. One of them waved his hand. It was Gales, but the diver thought he waved for help, and he made another try to board.

Suddenly the ship rolled farther over. Her tops came almost level with the highest of the surges. Bahama Bill saw this and determined to try to seize one. He swam to windward again; the difficulty of navigation was hard. He found he was getting very tired; the strain of pushing through that sea was too much for any one to stand long. A huge roller lifted him, then swung him close to the futtock-shrouds; he made a mighty effort to lift himself to seize them. But he was too far ex-

hausted, too tired out, and he realized this when he tried to lift himself clear to the shoulders with strokes of hands and feet. The current was setting him away again, and he saw he must take hold or give the matter up.

He made a direct drive for the top, and a sea lifted him just as he came near. It swept him along with a lightninglike swiftmess. He reached upward, then made a frantic grab at the iron of the cross-trees. His powerful fingers closed over them just as he went past. It was an awful strain. His arms seemed as if they would be jerked from his body.

His fingers cracked under the pull—but he held on. Then he suddenly found himself hanging in the air as the wave dropped from under him. He quickly threw up his leg and had just enough strength left to pass it over the cross-tree before another sea broke under him and washed him with foam. Then he climbed slowly and painfully up, and sat panting upon the maintopmast, holding on by the backstay and pulling himself out as far and as high as possible. Very soon he recovered.

"Yo' men stan' by fo' a line," he bawled to Gales and the rest in the mizzen. Then he cut or rather sawed away with a piece of gasket-cleat upon the topsail halyards, parting them finally and hauling the end, which had been washed to leeward, up to him in a coil. Taking the coil he climbed with hands and feet along the spring-stay between the masts. Although the lurching and hammering of the ship came near jerking him clear and throwing him into the sea, he made his way aft. He managed to get another line, knotted them together, and finally worked his way to where Gales and his two companions clung, half drowned and tired.

"Who are you—where are we—what island is it?" asked Gales when he reached them.

"I'm Bill Haskins; Bahama Bill, dey calls me; an' as fer de island, I suah don't know, cap, jest where it is—but dat's hit, right ober dar—see? 'N' we got toe git toe hit. 'N' I cayn't make no mo' trips through this yere sea."

A storm of flying water shut off further conversation. After it had let up a moment and the men got their breath, the diver set to work to get them in. At times the seas flew over them so strongly that it was all they could do to breathe and live. Gales and his two men were so exhausted from holding on to the rigging that they could make little way to save themselves, and the diver was very tired from the long swim.

To remain much longer upon the wreck was to be drowned. The rest of the crew had already gone, and the three men were in no condition to help themselves. Bahama Bill decided at once that they must leave and try the swim in.

"Leggo," he commanded Big Johnson.

The square-head hesitated, and received a blow in the face. He let go. Dragging him along the spring-stays, he was taken forward and fastened to the maintop. Then the diver went aft again. Three times did he make that desperate trip along the steel line of the spring-stays, and finally got all his men together as far forward as possible. Then he watched for a piece of floating wood.

A few planks came floating away, and although they seemed not to suit his purpose, he dived with the end of his line and came alongside of them, getting a good hold and raising his body upon them clear of the sea. Then he swam with all his might to hold his position to leeward of the top, until the line he saved could catch a turn. Holding the end with the bight over the mast, he was ready.

"Leggo—drop in—I'll catch yo'," he bawled, but the men held back. Gales saw what was wanted and urged the rest to go, waiting to be the last to leave.

"I cayn't wait here no longer—leggo," came the voice of the diver from the sea beneath. Gales hesitated no longer, he struck the big sailor repeatedly until he let go and dropped into the sea. The mate gathered his courage and dropped in after him. Then

Gales fell, and all three were floundering in the surge. Bahama Bill let go the line. It unrove and the float was adrift. He was off with his men.

With a few strokes the diver had them fast, seizing them and dragging them to his float, where they clung frantically. The water about them was full of wreckage, and the mate received a bad smash, making him lose his hold upon the planks. Bahama Bill grabbed him in time to keep a sea from washing him away; and, clinging to him, he drove the float with all his might for the shore.

It was a long swim, a swim that would test any man in condition alone; but the diver took his chance and tried to save the rest. His was a strange mental condition for a reefer; he was willing to do his best for those he served and was willing to risk his life to save strangers; yet he was anything but an unselfish man in many matters. He would quickly kill in a fracas if he felt inclined; and his record was not a pleasant one. During that long struggle he said not a word, not a sound to show he was either pleased or sorry that he had made the fight. Once he hit the big sailor, Johnson, for not keeping well down in the sea and giving the rest an equal portion of the float, but the blow was given like he delivered it to a dog who had taken too much of a general feed.

Slowly, very slowly, did the float and the four men go to leeward, Bahama Bill steering it and driving it with what force he could before the sea. The current set it past the entrance of the submerged part of the reef or island, and yet the black diver kept steadily on. Seas washed over them, broke with huge combing crests and smothered them, driving them down. Sometimes one or another let go from the long strain and the huge black diver had to gather him in and get him back to his hand-grip.

It was two hours after Bahama Bill had left them that Blye and Hacksaw Johnson saw the black object made by the four men and the float coming past the end of the opening in the lagoon.

They had waited, and had about given the diver up as lost when the crest of a breaker showed the four clinging to the wreckage, their float. Blye and Johnson, taking a small line from their boat, waded out as far as they dared and waited until the four came in close enough to cast it to them. Bahama Bill caught the end and held on while they towed the bunch through the inner roll of foam and dragged them up clear of the water. They were too weak to stand.

The diver dragged himself clear of the sea and lay panting upon his back, while the rest were rolled and treated to a series of operation used upon half-drowned persons. He had made the rescue by a narrow margin.

Captain Gales and his mate and seaman were taken aboard the *Seagull*, and there they had the necessary stimulants to bring them around. Blye lost no time in getting a sight at the sun that afternoon, and found he was a long way out of his course, a long way from the place he might expect.

"It's the Rocas, the bit of rock off the coast, quite out of the path of ships," said he, "and I don't see how we'll get away unless we can get across that barrier where the sea is breaking. It looks like we'll have to stay a while. We must have gone in on the top of a mighty big sea."

"We must have both got way off our reckoning," said Gales. "It was hard luck to get out when that blow struck us. I ran her same as you—only I lost—lost nearly all hands, too. There is ten thousand dollars in my safe aboard, but it won't do us any good here."

Bahama Bill looked hard at him while he spoke. "I dunno, cap, I dunno—let's wait a bit. I sho' am going to have a try fer dat money if yo' ship

holds together. We got plenty o' powder abo'd here, an' we kin do somethin' in de way o' wrackin' what'll come in handy later on."

Ashore the agents waited patiently for news of their schooner. She was last seen in the fog, the haze which swallowed her up off the coast. Since then no trace of her had been found. Vessels coming in had encountered the hurricane and told of its peculiar violence, its fury. Gradually the news came that the *Seagull* had been seen off Porto Bello shortly before the blow came on; and as nothing more had been heard of her, the consul at Colon came to the conclusion she had also met with trouble.

Within a month the two vessels had been posted as missing—lost ships that would never come back. And then interest died away, for the world is too busy to watch. The consul waited to serve his case upon Blye; but as he was now lost, he soon forgot him. No tidings came from any ports, and it was safe to suppose the *Seagull* had gone to the port of missing ships. The white veil had opened a moment, letting them see her standing along to the eastward—and then it had swallowed her up.

"I'm sorry for that fellow," said the consul, "but maybe it's just as well; he'd have lost his ship anyway, if he had stayed in port."

As a matter of fact, Blye was as cut off from the world as though he had been suddenly cast upon the moon. No vessel ever visited the Rocas, no ships ever came close enough to see the reef without giving it a wide berth. He had every chance of having to pass the remainder of his life, or at least a few years of it, in banishment from the haunts of men.

Mr. Hains' story, "Marooned," will appear in the next issue of THE POPULAR.



The Primal Instinct

By Bertrand W. Sinclair

Author of "Under the Great Bear," Etc.

A Western story, full of exciting happenings.
Suggests the question whether it's worth while
to do a thing without knowing why one does it



HIDDEN beneath a veil of white the Flat—it has no other name, and needs none—lies somnolent, impassive, through the winter, except for the times when a blizzard scourges its bald face. Later in the summer, when green grass and fresh shoots of sage and greasewood partly hide its gray nakedness, it seems to the casual beholder nothing more than a great patch of level country lying between the Bad Lands and the foot of the Pinnacle Range. But there is a period in the spring, a squalid season between the passing of winter and the time of new grass, when the Flat spreads desolate and treacherous, gray like the sea and as untamable. At least so feel the men whose lot it is to ride that God-forsaken area, though they seldom put the feeling into words, beyond cursing the Flat when their cattle bog and die in its miry embrace.

For it is the way of the Flat that every creek which traverses its sullen levels shall become a death-trap for cattle in the months of April and May. The Flat snow vanishes overnight before the touch of the warm chinook wind. But the firmer, deeper drifts among the Pinnacles soften more gradually, become soggy and damp, heavily laden with water. Then of a sudden the drifts give way, resolving themselves into a muddy flood that comes roaring down between granite-lined cañons, like some fierce, starved beast.

Once out of the Pinnacles, it gorges the shallow channels of Arrow Creek, the Boneyard, and Black Coulée, and spills and spreads among the roots of the sage. For the space of a week the Flat is intermittently a chain of lakes. As suddenly as it is born the flood dies; but it leaves a legacy of woe to the cattlemen; for the silt of countless years' depositing is soaked to its unreckoned depth, and will bog the lightest-footed brute that walks. Also, the sodden Flat, wind-whipped, barren beyond words, is spotted with 'dobe that clings like glue and weighs like lead on the feet of a horse.

Each year, with the passing of the snow, the range herds drift from Bad Land shelters to their summer feeding-grounds in the mountains. This concerted movement of bovine thousands is instinctive, purposeful, and no more to be stayed than the spring and autumn flight of wild geese, or the salmon-run to the spawning-beds. And because the Flat lies squarely in their path many of the weaker inevitably yield to the clutch of the boggy creeks. So, during this flitting of the long-horns, the big outfits that hold forth among the Pinnacles send down men to patrol the Flat.

High up in the range the Boneyard springs from a cleft in the ruggedest of the Pinnacles. Thence it pours north between narrow walls, till of a sudden it flings out upon the Flat and winds like a sluggish worm across the gray waste. The Boneyard it fitly named. And because it was so named, the L X

built a line-camp on its bank, midway of the Flat, and put two riders there in the spring of '91.

A week later Bill Frayne broke his leg in the process of extracting a gaunt cow from the Boneyard's grip. Phillips loaded him on a horse and took him to the home ranch. Then he hastened back to his work alone, knowing that the foreman would send down another puncher before long.

Next day, he rode in at noon to find a lean, stooped stranger at home in his camp.

"The L X sent me down," he explained to Phillips. "My name is King." And that, beyond a few commonplaces, was the extent of their conversation for the day. Phillips found himself wishing that the L X had sent a more sociable being to keep him company in that dreary place—the man was own brother to the Flat itself, with his eternal air of melancholy abstraction.

Phillips was asleep, that night, five minutes after he kicked off his boots. Wakening at daybreak he found that King had already started a fire and fed the horses. Together they rode the Boneyard till sundown. Again Phillips turned in, leaving King sitting on the box that served for chair, to rub his sleepy eyes open in the morning and find the man smoking by the stove. Also, he had a faint impression of hearing a voice in the night.

Thus the days passed until a week was gone, and the week became in turn a fortnight; by which time Phillips had made up his mind that King was burdened with the weight of a great evil or a great sorrow. For the man was unrest and sadness personified. He slept in snatches, wakening with a start. Often Phillips turned over in the night and drowsily beheld the gleam of a cigarette from the other's bunk. Many times he cried out brokenly, and immediately after got up and lighted a candle, making a pretense of seeking tobacco or papers if Phillips raised his head to venture an inquiry. Once or twice he went softly outside, and Phillips, peering through the dusty window, saw him pacing up and down, up and

down, in the white moon-glare that fell upon the Flat, his chin sunk forlornly on his breast. It got on Phillips' nerves, till he himself could no longer sleep soundly of nights.

He lay wakefully in his bunk one morning and listened to the soft pad of King's stockinged feet back and forth across the cabin floor, from two o'clock till dawn—with a candle burning on the table. When the graying east lightened the Flat and King blew out the useless candle, Phillips propped himself up on elbow, his even temper somewhat ruffled by broken rest.

"What the devil ails yuh, anyhow?" he snapped. "Yuh mill around in the night like yuh had all the sins uh the universe restin' heavy on your soul. Sufferin' Moses! I'd get some kind uh dope to make me sleep, if I was you, an' give other folks a chance."

"I wish I could," King answered simply. And neither spoke again until late in the forenoon, when they came upon a mired cow far down the Boneyard.

When by the tugging of their ponies they had torn the helpless brute from the tenacious grip of the cold mud, and watched her stagger weakly to high, dry ground, where she stood shivering in the warm sunlight, they loosened the cinches and squatted on the bank to give their horses a breathing-spell.

"What for was such a country ever made?" Phillips broke the long silence. "The's a hundred places on the Boneyard that'll swallow any critter that ain't stouter'n a young bull. An' the Flat seems like it's always layin' for yuh, someway. I tried t' cross below here alone, once, an' a quicksand got my hoss an' come near gettin' me. An' it's always lonesome, like the world must 'a' been in the beginnin', uh things. This is the third year I've rode line. I hate it worse every spring. It's just as unreasonable of old Mama Nature t' leave these here unfinished, worthless places layin' round loose," he concluded whimsically, "as 'tis for you t' be always gettin' up an' prowlin' at night, carryin' on them one-sided arguments with yourself, when yuh ought

to be poundin' your ear like any other tired puncher."

"I wish I could," King said again. "It's odd," he continued reflectively; "when a man has some trouble locked away inside, something he's got to face alone, he wants to talk about it every so often. It'll grow and grow on him, and take possession of him, till he either tells it or goes clean crazy. That's the way with nine men out of ten. Yet if I told you what keeps me on the grid day and night, you'd think me a damned fool. You wouldn't understand—I don't understand it myself."

"If it'll ease yuh any t' play the Ancient Mariner," Phillips promptly returned, "why, fire ahead."

King sat twisting a greasewood twig in his fingers for a moment. "Did you ever do a thing without knowing why you did it?" he began hesitatingly. "Feel compelled to do it—and then taste hell afterward because you did? I've often wondered if many men have had that sort of thing happen to them. I bumped into it first on the Abilene trail. If you know anything about that country I don't need to tell you how tough it was then. I was just getting broke in to the cow business those days. Another kid in the outfit and I stood guard together most of the time, and we got to be full-fledged partners. He got into trouble one day with a puncher from an outfit that was just ahead of us. It was a case of two words and a gun-play. They had an even break, but the kid was quickest and he got his man. His outfit packed him off and buried him, and we naturally supposed that was all there was to it.

"Maybe a week later we pulled close to a tin-horn camp on a crossing of the Smoky. This other trail outfit was camped a mile or two the other side of it. The kid and I went in with some others that night. We milled around a while together; then the kid sat down to a faro-bank. I stayed, watching his play, and the others scattered round town.

"In about half an hour I wanted to go. I didn't know why then, and I don't know why now. There was no

rush, because it was only ten o'clock and we had the whole night. But I had that feeling, and I couldn't shake it off any more than a man can help being hungry when he's missed two or three meals. I wanted the kid to come too; I felt as if he ought to come along. But he just laughed at me. I stayed a little longer, and then just like that"—he snapped his fingers—"I walked out, got on my horse, and broke for camp on a high run. Half way to camp, it struck me all of a heap what a fool way I was acting. I pulled up my horse and turned back. And I noticed then for the first time that I was sweating; my hair was wet—and cold.

"The saloon where I'd left the kid was jammed full of men when I swung out of the saddle and walked in. The faro-table was upset and the kid was stretched on the floor beside it. I'd only been gone a little while, they told me, when two men from this other trail outfit walked in and cut loose on him. He never had a show to pull his gun. They killed him and lit out for their camp before any of our crowd got there. I felt pretty blue after that—it might have come out different if I'd stayed with him."

"More'n likely you'd 'a' got yours, too," Phillips remarked.

"Maybe. But it made me feel like I'd left him in the lurch." King dug at the soft earth with his boot-heel a second or two. Then he went on. "Next time was in Colorado. Two fellows named Miller and Crepps and myself started out to take a bunch of horses through the Big Divide north of the Rabbit Ears, in the dead of winter. Half way through the pass it came to me again; that same feeling I had the night that Texas kid was shot! It was just like—— Well, I can't put it into words, but I couldn't go on. Miller and I came together when I told him, for the three of us had our hands full with the bunch. I knew it wasn't a square deal, but I couldn't go through that pass. I talked Miller out of a gun-play, and hit the back trail. And while I holed up at the first ranch I came to, a blizzard struck them in the heart of

the pass. It snowed them in, deep. They starved and froze to death, horses and men together. The range-riders found what the wolves had left, in the spring."

"Huh!" Phillips grunted. "Yuh played a lucky hunch."

King threw out both hands nervously. "Ah, but wait," he said quickly. "Next year I came north to Wyoming and went to work for an outfit on Powder River. Four or five miles down the river, on the other side, was another ranch. I crossed the Powder horse-hunting, one day, and met Morse, who owned it. Sometimes you meet a man you like right from the start, without knowing why or caring. That was how he struck me.

"And he was white clear through. I lay two months at the ranch that winter, with a broken leg, and he'd ride in every other day, regular as clock-work, to see how I was coming on. He sent clear to Los Angeles after oranges for me; and he'd bring a book or some magazines after he found out I liked to read. It was a sure cure for the blues just to have him sit in the room talking and laughing in his big, bull voice.

"He got married the next summer; married a woman from somewhere East—a little, blue-eyed, slim thing, not the sort you generally see on the ranges. But she thought the sun shed its light for his especial benefit, and all his friends were her friends. And after she had the ranch fixed up to suit herself it got to be more like home to me than ever.

"Time I'd been there two years I was running the outfit I started in to work for. Then I could go and come when I felt like it, and when we weren't on round-up I got into the way of dropping down to the other ranch once or twice a week regular. Sometimes they'd drive up together, but not often. Mostly I went there; and we'd sprawl around in front of the big fireplace, smoking and listening to her play the piano; and in the morning I'd ride home thinking this little old world wasn't such a bad place after all. I used to think it would be fine to settle

down like that—only there was so much new country I wanted to see. I knew I'd drift again pretty soon.

"The second winter after she came, he rode in to the ranch late one afternoon and told me I'd better come along. I never needed any coaxing from him; so a few minutes afterward we were riding north, cussing the cold wind that crept up the valley to meet us.

"The Powder's treacherous summer or winter, but worse I think in the winter, for the ice is never the same. It'll freeze thick enough to carry a herd, and then the bubbling current will wear it in patches, to the thinness of paper. These places neither men nor stock can see till they walk into them, for the snow lies white and even on top. And the air-holes come and go, freezing up to-day and breaking out in another place to-morrow.

"The river widened opposite his ranch, flowing evenly, so that the ice was always solid—it was safe crossing any time. But this night he swung down onto the ice a mile or so above. There was a bunch of cattle he wanted to look at, he said. We had to go down a sharp little hill right there, and going down my saddle slipped; when we struck the level I stopped to fix it and cinch up afresh. He waited a second or two, but his horse was fidgety with the cold, and kept lunging against the bit, so he went on, going slow.

"I was ready by the time he'd gone fifty yards. I laid hold of the stirrup to put my foot in it and mount, and caught myself standing there looking up and down the river like a man that's lost something. And in a flash it came over me that I was hanging back; I didn't want to follow him across. When I realized what I was thinking, I laughed out loud—it was so foolish—and swung up. But in spite of that, every step my horse took the feeling grew on me. It was a fight every inch of the way; a losing fight against a senseless, irrepressible craving to turn back.

"God! it was like some big, unseen hand slapping me in the face. Something I couldn't understand nor strug-

gle against. It wasn't fear of any known danger, because there was none—no more than there always is on the Powder. Anyway, I'm no coward; I've looked old Death in the eye without quaking often enough to know that I won't weaken when I come to the end of the trail. And yet it was worse than fear—for my tongue dried in my mouth and my heart seemed to swell up and choke me, as I forced myself to follow him across the ice.

"He looked back when I was thirty or forty feet behind him, and let his horse break into a trot. He turned his head again in a second. That was my last sight of him—looking back over his shoulder at me, the red of the sunset lighting up his face. The eggshell ice gave way under his horse's feet; and the Powder swallowed the two of them with a crackling snarl. And I—I whirled my horse blindly, and drove home the steel."

He stopped, and looked at Phillips half expectantly; but Phillips said nothing, only continued to stare down at the Boneyard, crawling sluggishly over the quicksands.

"I could have saved him, even then," he went on apathetically. "I might have gone back and thrown him my rope. But though he was my friend and I knew he would have done as much for me, I couldn't go to him. That—that—whatever it was, drove me to the hills as surely as the black water was sucking him down. I pulled up on the bank and looked an instant toward the little patch of open water. Something dark bobbed up once, pawed at the ice, and sank again. When it was gone, I headed for the ranch, trembling like the aspens, spurring my horse like the madman I was—as if I could ever get away from it. Every step of the way I could see him rise, clutch at the jagged ice-edge, and sink back. And sometimes I could see the big, sad eyes of his wife.

"I stayed at the ranch only long enough to saddle a fresh horse, and write to the company that they needed another foreman. A week later I was in Arizona. Ever since I've drifted—and always he goes with me. Do you

wonder I can't sleep? How can I, when I see him every time I close my eyes? Over and over again he drowns in Powder River, while I sit by and watch. Something stronger than I made me leave him there to die like a trapped rat. But I'm paying for it. I'm living in hell, and I can't seem to die. I can't get away from the sight of his drab face, never—never."

King's voice trailed the last words out in a whisper. For the space of a minute neither man spoke. Then Phillips rose to his feet, and caught the reins of his horse.

"Let's go home," he said abruptly.

Slugging heavy-footed through the 'dobe their horses brought them to the line-camp within half an hour of sundown. Already the Flat was a gray blur, and above them the Pinnacle Range was blocked out in blood-red slopes and intense shadows. As they drew near the cabin they saw blue wisps of smoke floating from the mud chimney. The bulk of a huge man was bent over the tiny sheet-iron stove; and the voice that greeted their entrance was of its owner's vast proportions—a big, bull-toned voice that rumbled loudly in the small room.

"Hello thar, Phillips," he hailed. "Here I am, spoilin' your good grub, as usual."

He straightened up with a pan of sizzling bacon in one hand. His gaze swept past Phillips, and falling on King became a fixed stare. Recognition, wonder, unbelief succeeded each other in his expression.

"By thunder!" he exclaimed. The frying-pan tilted and the hot grease poured down, spreading over the rough board floor, but he took no notice. Again he uttered "By *thunder*," in the incredulous tone of a man who doubts the evidence of his senses. And King, wide-eyed, put out his shaking hands as if to ward off something terrible, and backed away.

The big man dropped the skillet unheedingly and followed him up.

"Ed King!" he cried. "Ed King! I know it's you. Don't look at me that way, man., Don't yuh know me?"

"Don't touch me." King shrank slowly, speaking in a strained whisper. "You're nothing but a mockery. Keep your cold hands off me."

"Aw, for Heaven's sake, have some sense." The big voice rose louder, imploring. "I'm jest as much alive as I was the last time we shook hands. I got out uh the Powder that night—honest to God! Got hold of a piece uh solid ice and crawled out, and ran like hell all the way home to keep from freezin'. Take hold uh me, Ed—I ain't no spook."

King backed against the wall, watching the other's face with unswerving, uncanny eyes. For a moment the man hesitated, then deliberately stepped forward, caught King by the shoulders and shook him gently, smiling uncertainly as he did so. The touch of warm, living flesh was sufficient to work a miracle. Like a flash King's thin hands clutched at the other, and a flood of incoherent questions bubbled from his lips.

"Sure, sure," he answered King repeatedly, "I got out all right. Forget it, Ed; forget it. I knowed yuh had good reasons for pullin' out. Forget it. Yes, I quit the Powder for good, a couple uh years after. Been in the Pinnacles ever since. Say, let's sit down and eat; we can talk things over while we smoke."

"Eat?" King laughed feverishly. "Morse, you don't know how I feel. I want to yell—and shoot holes in the roof. I couldn't eat just now. It would choke me."

But Morse declared that an empty stomach bred bad dreams, and so they finished preparations for the meal and ate. Then they left the table as it was and hunched over the stove, for a chill evening wind was droning up over the desolate Flat.

Until well past midnight they sat about the stove. Phillips rolled cigarette after cigarette, and listened silently to the other two bridging the years, the years that King had spent in purgatory. Over and over King would repeat, "I can hardly believe it; I can hardly make you seem real." And

Morse would slap him on the back and roar in his great voice, "By thunder, Ed, yuh sure had a tough time."

Presently King's eyelids began to droop; he yawned. The stream of their talk ran dry. King yawned again, stretching his arms above his head. Then he got up, laying his hand on Morse's shoulder.

"Guess I'll roll in," he said, relapsing into the terse colloquialism of the range. "I'll sleep like a log—the first time in God knows how long."

He went over to his bed in the corner. In a few minutes he was fast asleep, breathing rhythmically. Morse finished his pipe, and sat for some time nursing the empty bowl in his hand.

"Queerest thing I ever heard of," he said thoughtfully at length.

"It don't seem natural," Phillips answered in the same low tone. "But I guess his nerves was all shot to pieces, an' never got over seein' yuh go down."

"Naw, I don't mean *that*," Morse whispered, leaning nearer. "I meant what really happened that day. Yuh don't know how the play come up."

"Sure, I do," Phillips insisted. "He told me just this afternoon—the whole blame thing."

Morse shook his head. "Naw, he don't know himself—yet. Maybe I'll tell him, some time. It *is* queer. Yuh recollect how he just couldn't drive himself out there to he'p me? Well, sir, that ain't natural; 'cause I know Ed King is as game as they make 'em. 'Twasn't the yellow streak showin'—he ain't got one. It was me, strugglin' there, plumb crazy with wantin' t' murder him. If he'd come out there t' he'p me, an' got close enough, I'd 'a' killed him that day. He don't seem t' know it, but I took a shot at him first time I come up. Then I went down again an' lost m' grip on the gun. After that I fought like a wolf t' get out, not because I wanted so bad t' live, as I wanted t' get him."

"Why?" Phillips leaned nearer, wondering.

"Account uh m' wife—yuh heard him speak uh her," Morse acknowledged.

shamefacedly. "She's dead now, an' she was as good a woman as ever breathed. But I got the crazy idea that she'n Ed—well, yuh know what a damn' fool a man can be sometimes; 'n' Ed had me beat a Mormon block for looks and education; everything that women takes to in a man. I was that crazy about her I could 'a' bit off m' tongue every time she looked at him. An' that day I broke loose an' abused her scandalous—an' somethin' she said set me off. I went after him, an' I aimed t' get him t' the ranch an' kill him before her eyes. An' when I broke through the ice all I thought uh was a chance t' get hold uh him an' drag him down with me, if I couldn't get out. But somethin' kep' him back. It makes me shiver.

"He didn't know I was headin' him t' the ranch t' kill him or be killed m'self," Morse persisted. "An' the hell of it is, I was wrong—dead wrong. I soon found that out, when he never showed up no more. But I don't sabe the thing. Never will, I guess. What a lot uh things come up in this little old world that we can't understand."

They undressed and lay down together. A little after sunrise Phillips wakened. He glanced across at the other bunk, and marveled. The melancholy lines about King's mouth were no longer visible; his features were relaxed, peaceful, harboring the ghost of a smile; and he slept so soundly that even the noise of Phillips stamping his boots into place on his feet did not disturb his slumber.



THE WOLF'S TOOTH AS MASCOT

A SINGULAR revival is taking place in Paris for wearing the tooth of a wolf or balger set in gold as a mascot. An old superstition thought the wearing of such ornaments to be provocative of good fortune. The custom of wearing a thumb-ring is also being resuscitated, and at this present time a charming young actress on the English stage is demonstrating the vogue—partly, no doubt, because it is in keeping with the period in which her present play is laid, and partly in recognition of the fashion Paris is patronizing.



FEEDING HORSES BY CLOCKWORK

A PROVISION merchant has invented an ingenious contrivance by which, it is stated, he is able to feed his horses without personal attendance, through the medium of an ordinary alarm-clock.

In a small office adjoining the stable the clock is placed on a shelf. Attached to the alarm key is a piece of copper wire, and this is fastened to a small brass roller that runs over a wooden rod. At the end of the rod is a heavy weight. When the clock "goes off" the wheel is drawn over the rod and releases the weight, which falls to the floor.

The corn-box is filled overnight, and immediately the weight is released a small door at the bottom of the box flies open and the corn falls into the manger. The horses never fail to rise at the sound of the alarm, knowing what is to follow, and when the drivers turn up, say, at seven or eight o'clock, the animals are ready for taking the shafts. Another advantage to be gained by the method is that the horses need never be placed in the shafts before the breakfast has had time to digest.

The Last Dose

By E. Temple Thurston

Author of "A Change of Dress," Etc.

An interesting tale of life on the outskirts of civilization, that shows what's really in a man when freed from conventional surroundings



WHITE MAN'S GRAVE," they call it down in Sierra Leone. But the whole of West Africa is a death-trap. Some parts of the world are like the carnivorous plants, tempting in all their wealth of color, alluring in their subtle odors. So they catch their prey. A white man ventures into the heart of them and the earth sucks him into herself. In a few months he is lying beneath the six feet of vulturous sod, food for the very earth that bred him.

It is like this, inland from Lagos. Away up in the forest beyond Abute-metta the land has that swampy, turgid appearance of a reptile dozing in the glittering sun, digesting the raw flesh in its well-filled belly. And at night the tongue of death licks up from the marshes in a velvet mist. The first sight of it to the white man brings a thrill of horror. In it he can see the carnivorous beast prowling for its meal. You find him going into camp and draining his quinin, the hand shaking that holds the glass, the throat swallowing eagerly the magic draft that guards him against the rapacious attacks of the hungry earth. He throws himself into his hammock and looks out at the colossal tree-ferns throwing up their monstrous lacework against an ink-black sky, cursing the whole wonderful beauty of it, wondering if he will ever get back free and unscathed to the ungainly elms and ponderous oaks—to the

flat fields and humble vegetation of a cleaner-feeding land.

All this is in the early days of his sojourn, in the days when news comes up from the base of a man going under whom he dined with some nights ago, in the days when the fever fiend lightly touches his forehead with cold, damp fingers and passes on. Two or three months of it, two or three goes of fever, and familiarity has bred its litter of contempt. Even death itself settles down into its proper perspective. The coming and going of men, men being ordered home, men sent down to the hospital at Lagos to be starved of alcohol and killed like flies in a fly-trap, men dying in a night of fever and buried in a pit the niggers have been flogged to dig—these things harden a man, if they don't succeed in breaking him.

It is a rough school, the scholars are rough and the master spoils none with sparing. Here you learn the relative value of individual life in simple numerical units—no catchy problems in mathematics; no binomial theorems or quadratic equations; it is all taught you in simple arithmetic on a large slate from which, with one sweep of the sponge, the figures can be wiped out of existence, making room for others to take their place.

The Lagos Government Railway calls out of America as many men as it can get. Some come leaping for the handsome pay, some because the devil may care; some are driven by necessity—between the shafts, chafing at the,

harness, but spurred to it, beaten to it, under the whip of need. However they may come, there are not many of them. And whoever they are who go, you will find them back again in America in a year or two, jaundiced, wrecked with fever, shaken in nerves; always supposing that they have not found a grave in the swamp-land that stencheth through the forest away beyond Abutemetta.

Engineers they are, most of them—the world's pioneers, risking everything to lay a shaky track of rails through a country that God seems to have forsaken and left to rot. In an atmosphere of damp and clinging heat, alternated at night with the searching cold, they work at their cheerless, thankless job; only niggers, the scum of the earth, reeking of it, to help them. A mile of rail goes down in a day—sometimes more, often less.

Then the old antiquated engine comes staggering along with the fresh material, hissing, snorting, shrieking through the deep, dark, limitless forest; and with a silent sense of pride these men stand by and watch her traveling her few hundreds of yards which they by their right and might of manhood have won for the use of men—the few hundreds of yards out of the many thousands of miles that are left.

When it is a bridge to build, the average distance covered in the day goes down to feet, to inches even. But the first time the old engine rides over the completed span, the sense of pride quits silence, and a shout of Americans, that the world might hear had it the heart to listen, rings up into the giant fern-trees and out through the roof of the forest to God's sky.

This is the heroism of it, the abstract quality of heroism which makes its appeal to those far enough off from the canvas. Come closer; look into the thing and you will find its reality. Prolonged solitude, the days that pass without the sight of a white face, only the brutal lips and flattened nostrils of the natives to look to for humanity; the soft, warm, humid climate, these are the conditions that drive our hero-pioneers to the crying need of the stim-

ulant of alcohol. They drink like dogs at a public fountain. In batches they are sent down to the hospital at Lagos where the doctors, fed at the governor's table, imbued with the governor's morals, cut off the wretches from their drink as you snuff a candle in the face of daylight. Like dumb animals they cry for it—cry for it in vain, and go into death with the bedclothes between their teeth—spitting at the mouth.

Our concern is with the realism of it—the heroism, too, for any who wish to find it. Lester was the second engineer—which is to say the man who does the first engineer's work and receives the second engineer's pay. The first engineer spent most of his time down at Lagos in refined society. For in this, as in all walks of life, the title of a man is in direct relation to the money he earns. Stevenson was the doctor of the district. The district extended to a thirty-mile radius from the camp, and within that radius Stevenson's practise consisted of attending to the ills of some hundreds of natives employed by the railway and the few white men who chanced to be working in his locality. To these latter he gave the best of his skill. The natives were more or less objects of experiment. It is almost impossible for the white man to overcome his prejudice for the black. He feels and shows his contempt. The very presence of a native stirs the beast in him.

On these two men, then, the second engineer and the doctor of the district seventy miles east of Abutemetta, whatever interest this story may have is concentrated. Two men, racked with fever, rolled in blankets, sweating with a rush of heat and alternately shivering and cursing the cold. In the corner of a tent close by, a black man lay, apparently unconscious—bruised, battered, bleeding—the result of breaking the bottle which contained Stevenson's store of quinin. He had been caught in the act, trying to mop up the pool of liquid that was fast soaking into the earth. Horror twisted his eyeballs as he looked up and saw Stevenson standing in the opening of the tent. Steven-

son's language is not possible of repetition. The result of what he did was to be seen ten minutes later when he chucked the motionless body of the native into the corner of the small tent.

All this had happened thirty-six hours before, and now the fever was playing with them as a cat plays with a mouse. The little quinin that was left, they eked out sparingly—doses that had little effect. A boy had been despatched immediately to Abutemetta for a further supply; but the possibility of his return within two days was vague and impossible to rely upon. This was a race for life. They sat and waited for the outcome. With every crackling of the brushwood outside, one or the other would jump up and return with a shaking head. There were a thousand odd chances that he might fall in with another camp and be able to get enough quinin to stave off this attack. The two men had counted on every one of these, as you count your chances at roulette while the ball is still rolling.

Now it had come to the last dose of quinin. Stevenson held up the bottle and tried to grin. The attempt was sickly. His lips stuck to his teeth and the expression became ugly.

"One more go," he said, licking his lips.

Lester nodded his head. The precious liquid laughed at him in the light of the swinging lamp.

"Well—what are we going to do?" he asked. The words clicked on his dry tongue. "No good halving that—is there?"

"Not a damned bit of good—not enough for the sort of dose we want, as it is."

They both looked at it, each wondering why the other did not snatch up the bottle and drain it off.

"Well—what are we going to do?" Lester asked again. "Toss for it?"

Stevenson shifted in his seat. "God, no! There's too much chance in that. I have had enough of luck. This dose is probably going to hold one of us up till that confounded boy gets back. Listen! Did you hear that?"

The moment brought a pause, then

Lester shook his head. "Nothing," he said. They sat again in silence.

"I'll play you checkers," said Stevenson presently.

Lester looked up—eyes glittering with fever, sweat standing out on his forehead.

"For the dose?"

"Yes."

"You play better than I do."

"Not on the average."

"You beat me last time."

"You beat me the time before."

"Did I?"

"Yes; don't you remember; three kings; you wiped me up."

Lester wiped his hands on the blanket that enveloped him.

"All right," he said. "Come on—best of three, or one game?"

"One game," said Stevenson.

They brought out the battered checker-board and laid it on the table, shook out the checkers with a clatter from an old cigar-box, and sat down to the business as they had done a hundred times before. All the formulas they went through in silence—the shuffling of the two pieces in the hand. Stevenson held them behind his back and Lester nodded to the right hand.

Then they began—two men playing a game of checkers for a chance of life. Through the forest of tangled vinous growths that dropped their endless trailers from the highest palms, the cries of roaming beasts would sometimes reach them—weird sounds which their ears had long since grown accustomed to. Sometimes a native would pass the opening of the tent and stop for a moment to gaze in. But they seldom looked up. Each move was made with cautious deliberation; and at last, when three red and three black pieces lay captured at the side of the board, Lester leaned back in his chair.

"Heaven!" he exclaimed. "I feel as if I couldn't even last out the game."

Stevenson raised his eyes critically for a moment. They took in the bottle containing the dose of quinin as he let them return to the board.

"Wonder what my people will say—when they hear," said Lester.

Stevenson shook himself.

"Are you married?" he asked.

Lester swung his head to the negative.

"I am," said the doctor.

"Kids?"

"Three."

"God!"

"Yes—that's the worst of it. Three."

"My move?"

Stevenson nodded and Lester bent over the board.

So the game wore slowly on and the prize—the dose of quinin—stood on the table between them.

"Where do your people live?" Stevenson asked presently.

"Philadelphia." He made his move before he answered.

"Father an engineer, too?"

"Yes. Took it up when it paid. Not much left in it now."

"He's well off then?"

"Draws his four thousand a year out of one of the railways. I call that comfort—compared with this."

Stevenson took a sip of water from a cup and pulled his blanket more tightly around him.

"Four thousand dollars—a deuce of a lot of money," he said musingly. "They pay me at the rate of fifteen hundred here. Fifteen hundred a year! It sounds all right when you see it on paper over in America. When you come out here and find men going down like ninepins, you begin to think you'll be lucky with half a year's screw and your skin."

"You send it back to your wife, I suppose?" Lester's teeth chattered, snapping the words short.

"Every mail."

"What'll she do?"

The feverish color swept out of Stevenson's face. His cheeks were blanched. He tried to lick his lips.

"How—do? What d'you mean?"

"If this thing knocks us out?"

"Oh, for God's sake go on playing! It's your move."

Lester surveyed the board. In his last move, Stevenson had left a piece to be taken. Lester noted it. His next

move, then, was almost compulsory. His hand was beginning to stretch out when his eye caught Stevenson's hand feeling inside the blanket and extracting a letter from his pocket. Lester hung with his hand poised over the board, while Stevenson began to read the epistle.

"That from your wife?" asked Lester.

"Yes. Lord help her! Listen to this: 'I bought Bertie a present the other day. The poor little chap was given nothing on his last birthday, and when your letter came with the money, I felt I ought to be generous. Of course I only spent a dollar. I couldn't spare more.'"

"Oh—that's enough!" Lester exclaimed thickly. He turned back to the board. There was Stevenson's piece, still ready to be taken. Could he take it? Had he any right to win the game? He pictured that woman over in America stinting herself in order to buy her little son a present for a dollar. What would she do if no more letters containing money came from over the water? What would she do if the next letter she received was from the Lagos Government Railway, announcing with regrets that her husband was dead—buried in the swamp-land seventy miles east of Abutemetta? She would be glad even of that dollar then. He had no particular regard for Stevenson. On two or three occasions the doctor had proved himself to be wanting in ordinary courage.

But this woman over in America, whom he had never seen, filled his imagination with sympathy. He found something pitiful in the precariousness of her position. Had any other woman been dependent upon him, this one would not have entered into his consideration. As it was, he felt she claimed it all. She was as dependent upon him—not by right of law, but by right of humanity—as she was upon her husband. If he gave Stevenson the game, let him take the dose of quinin, luck and the devil might pull him through until the boy returned. As yet, of the two, the fever had struck him harder than it had the doctor; yet death,

was lurking in the shadow of both of them.

His hand began its slow, uncertain descent toward the board. In these moments he was realizing the just value of life; that it depends upon a man's necessity to others, rather than to himself. His love of life itself is no reliable valuation, no justification of his right to live. So Lester sat in judgment upon himself—passing his own death-sentence. His hand descended to the board and another piece was moved. He dared not look up at Stevenson as he did it, lest the signs of his determination should be read in his face.

"Jump you!" exclaimed Stevenson. The words leaped out of his mouth. He seized the piece and laid it by his side as though in fear that the move would be withdrawn. Lester showed no sign of discomfiture; but from that onward, he steadily lost piece after piece, until with crowned men Stevenson swept the board.

Stevenson mumbled something about being sorry—that he thought it had been the fairest way—then his hand reached out for the bottle of quinin. Lester turned away as he drank it, but he heard it gurgling in his throat. Almost immediately after Lester passed into a comatose condition; the sweat draining in channels down his cheeks, he fell back limp and unconscious in his chair.

It was still night when he came to again. The lamp was burning dimly. Stevenson had crawled into his hammock and was lying there motionless. Lester's eyes wandered feverishly around the tent. His sense of weakness was almost overpowering. His eyelids, weighted like lead, fell down over his eyes again. When he opened them once more, the first thing he beheld was Stevenson's letter lying on the floor. For five minutes he gazed at it, thinking vaguely—indefinitely—how

that had brought him to his decision. He had made a sacrifice for a woman he had never seen—the greatest sacrifice a man can make. What else had she said in the letter besides what he had heard? A feeling that he had a right to know dragged him to his feet. He staggered—shivering all through his body—across the floor and picked up the letter. Then he tottered back to his chair.

It began with passionate affection. It went on with passion—the passion of a woman who has yielded herself heart, body and soul, and learned too late that honor is not going to be her portion in the transaction. It was the letter Stevenson had read from. He recognized the handwriting as he had first seen it under the lamp. But this was not from Stevenson's wife—rather from some unfortunate woman whom he had betrayed. There was no mention of her children. A gentle complaint that he had not sent her as much money as last time—that was all.

Lester flung the letter on the table and staggered across the floor to Stevenson's hammock.

"Wake up, you devil!" he shouted in a weak, thin voice. "Wake up!"

There was no answer. The stiff body gave no sign of life to the blows that he showered upon it with his feeble fist. Stevenson had gone already. Lester put his hand on the heart. It had stopped beating. With a smothered moan, he struggled to his own hammock and climbed into it like a tottering child.

Two hours after sunrise the next morning, the boy returned with the fresh store of quinin. He found two hammocks swinging dead men; and before them, squatting on his haunches on the ground, was the bruised and battered native from the other tent—cursing them gutturally in a language of his own.



Tales of the Lost Legion

By Francis Whitlock

VIII.—HEARTS AND DIAMONDS

A story packed full of the exciting adventures that befell two men in their search for wealth and a lost race among a mysterious people dwelling only a few weeks' journey from the United States. How they keep themselves hid from the world at large is here told most interestingly and convincingly.

(In Two Parts—Part I.)



FOR ten years I have lived at Izaguaykil, which is not a town which one would pick out for residential purposes without some particular purpose in view," remarked the

gentleman whose card bore the name of Jacob Schmidt. Mr. Jabez Cooper, a capitalist who possessed sufficient powers of imagination to be interested in any proposition which held out a prospect of profit, nodded his head encouragingly.

"Perhaps you have never heard of Izaguaykil?" continued Mr. Schmidt. Mr. Cooper shrugged his shoulders, and looked significantly at the open door of the great vault which adjoined his private office.

"If you will wait a moment, I will convince you that I have," he said, rising from his chair and walking toward the vault. A few minutes later, after opening the burglar-proof safe in the innermost compartment, he returned, carrying a small, wash-leather bag. Opening it, he dumped the contents on his desk. "Izaguaykil is a small town situated on the edge of the great wilderness in Yucatan," he continued in a singsong voice. "Yucatan

is a peninsula extending into the Caribbean Sea, and forms a part of the Republic of Mexico. Its principal exports are Sisal hemp, which the cordage trust manufactures into alleged pure Manila rope, yellow-fever germs, and horned toads for the natural history museums."

"And you might add that 'a peninsula is a body of land almost surrounded by water,' and that Mexico is still called a republic by the grace of Porfirio Diaz," answered Schmidt sarcastically. "Such information as you have quoted can be obtained from any cheap encyclopedia; but I am ready to supply the real article."

"At your own price, I presume," suggested Mr. Cooper. Schmidt chuckled triumphantly.

"I am foregoing none of my advantages," he admitted. A sarcastic smile came to the lips of the capitalist as he held up between finger and thumb an object which might have been mistaken for a piece of slag.

"This, as you are probably aware, is of considerable value," he said. "It is, in fact, an uncut diamond which possesses that peculiar, steel-blue brilliance peculiar to the products of the exhausted mines of Brazil, and which makes those old mine stones so much more valuable,

weight for weight, than the modern African stones. This peculiarly unattractive figure"—and here he held up a representation of a hideous, pot-bellied heathen god—"possesses an unknown value. It is made of virgin gold and intrinsically is worth, perhaps, thirty dollars. Its historic associations, however, make it worth almost anything.

"This spear-head"—Mr. Cooper had replaced the god on the desk, and held aloft a piece of flat copper, pointed at the end—"is intrinsically worth very little; but it is one of the best specimens of hardened, tempered copper in existence. If I possessed the secret of tempering the metal—a secret which, you are undoubtedly aware, perished with the Incas—I should feel that I was safe from an old age of penury. Perhaps the exhibition of these articles—to say nothing of those which I still hold in reserve—will convince you that I know something of Izaguaykil and the stories which come from it."

"I have seen many similar objects there during my residence," admitted the other man quietly. "I rather expected to find such things in your possession; for several men whom I believe to have been grub-staked by you have endeavored to find the real origin of those objects since I have been living in Izaguaykil. If my memory serves me correctly, however, they never came back to report."

"If your other information is equally accurate it is of little value," remarked Cooper, as he returned the objects to the bag. "I have had such an expedition in view for several years; but as yet I have sent no one."

"Yet men have gone in," replied Schmidt incredulously. Cooper smiled as he twiddled his thumbs over a broad expanse of waistcoat.

"Yes, I happen to be conversant with the history of the two principal expeditions," he said. "In a nutshell, here is the story: In the explored portions of Yucatan there are many imposing ruins of Aztec cities which flourished before the conquest of Mexico by Cortez. These have been photographed, ex-

plored, measured and mapped by archeologists; but persistent rumors exist of still greater and more important ruins in the interior. The occasional appearance of articles such as I have shown you in Izaguaykil, and the tales of the Indians who bring them, lend a certain amount of verisimilitude to these rumors. Stimulated by these reports, the French Academy of Sciences some thirty-two years ago despatched an expedition consisting of forty men to explore the unknown territory thoroughly.

"The Indians were won over, and after communicating with the tribes in the interior promised safe conduct under certain conditions. The members of the expedition were to be allowed to make drawings, measurements and photographs. They solemnly pledged themselves not to excavate nor to disturb the tombs and sacrificial mounds. They departed from Izaguaykil in great spirits, well provided with all the necessary supplies for the journey and the exploration, but practically without arms. Since the day they disappeared into the jungle no word of them has ever reached civilization. I am open to correction; but I believe that I have stated the case correctly?"

Schmidt smiled knowingly at the interrogative intonation of the last sentence. "I am listening; but perhaps I could amend that a trifle if I chose to," he said.

Cooper shrugged his shoulders rather indifferently. "If you have come to me to propose that I send a rescue expedition, you are wasting your time and mine," he answered. "I am interested only in financial profit; and scientists who have been thirty-two years in the jungle would be so far behind the times that they would have no market value. However, we shall consider the second expedition. This was in no sense an archeological one, but was out for the money. A soldier of fortune drifted to Izaguaykil, and was so impressed by the tales of the Indians and the samples of the treasures which they exhibited that he had no difficulty in recruiting a band of two hundred Texas cowboys, Indian fighters and general bad men to

search for it. They were all good fighters and were well armed.

"It is now seven years since they started in, and three weeks later a remnant of forty of them reached the coast in a pitiable condition. They had been harassed night and day, and fought continually against an unseen enemy. They were killed by poisoned darts, poisoned by bad water, and generally bedeviled until the survivors turned tail and fled. One or two of them have undertaken other commissions for me since then; but I have never been able to induce one of them to take up exploration in Yucatan."

"And yet there must be some one at your disposal who could be induced to undertake it—if he had the advantage of such information as I could supply," suggested Schmidt.

Cooper drew a pad before him and took up a pencil. "I am waiting to hear your proposition—in figures," he said curtly; Schmidt gave a sigh of relief. He was not an attractive-looking personage, this Jacob Schmidt. Not a vestige of hair was visible on his head or face, and a great polished dome of a cranium rose in an irregular and nodular mass above where his eyebrows should have been. Small gray eyes separated only by the width of a narrow, prominent and hooked nose peered out from under red lids without the trace of lashes; and the nose itself almost met the sharp, pointed chin in front of straight, thin lips. When those lips smiled they disclosed toothless gums; but in spite of the grotesque resemblance to Punchinello, there was no appearance of great age on the face.

His figure, too, bore a certain likeness to the nursery favorite; for his back was curved in a hump, and his abdomen was distinctly pendulous; but the short, sturdy legs and the long arms which permitted the hands to hang at the level of the knees indicated great strength; while his expression and quick, nervous movements bespoke an alertness of mind above the average.

"First, I must state as a fact something which I think you can verify by investigation—I have more influence

with the Indians who bring these objects to Izaguaykil than any other white man," he said. "I cannot guarantee the safety of any one whom you may send into the interior; but it's a cinch that without my safe-conduct he will never get out alive."

"That," said Cooper, "is one of the details which I always leave to the men who work for me. I furnish the money and the general instructions; but they are none of them looking for safe-conducts. As I pay only on delivery of the goods, my risk is confined to the amount advanced for preliminary expenses. I would suggest that you get down to figures; that you tell me what you expect and what I get out of it."

"You get all that you would desire," answered Schmidt, a little trace of contempt in his voice. "The treasure, if it is obtainable, the secret of hardening copper, everything which may come under the head of material reward."

"And you?" said Cooper incredulously. For he was accustomed to have promoters haggle for the lion's share when they submitted propositions to him.

"I? For me only that which you would not value," answered Schmidt excitedly. "You have endowed a university which bears your name; but for real knowledge, unless it brings you money, you care not a straw. It is I, Jacob Schmidt, one-time professor of Heidelberg University, who would prove that Professor von Pumpnickel of Leipsic is an ass when he says that there is no truth in the legends of the continued existence of the Incas and the Aztecs. For ten years we have disputed in the learned publications of Germany, and for ten more I have lived in Izaguaykil to get more ammunition. Ha! At last I have the proof; but to make it certain I must go myself to their hidden cities and take a witness with me. Gold there must be there; diamonds are sure to be found, and much knowledge which has been buried from the world for three hundred years. But I go to that dangerous wilderness that I may write down that Professor Joseph von Pumpnickel is an ass!"

"Of course, if that sort of a division suits you, I haven't a word to say," answered Cooper soothingly. "We'll put it in writing before you start; but I'd like to know just what you are building on before I put up the money for the expedition."

"And, if I convince you that there is a foundation for my belief, you will find me a companion who is reliable?" demanded Schmidt eagerly.

"I think I can find some misguided individual who will fill the bill, if you can show me that there is a reasonable chance of profit," assented the capitalist. The man of learning produced from his pocket a voluminous packet of documents; many of them were of a peculiar substance resembling papyrus, and were covered with queer hieroglyphics. So interesting did these prove to the man of business that he devoted more than two hours of his valuable time to their consideration; and at the end of that time he drew up a rough agreement which would give to him all of the material profit resulting from the joint expedition of Professor Schmidt and such a companion as Mr. Cooper might select, into the unknown wilds of Yucatan.

"Now that's settled, and I'll get busy on my part of it," he remarked after the German had affixed his signature as the party of the second part. "I understand that a steamer sails at ten tomorrow morning, and I'll have my man there." Schmidt, who had taken the precaution to assure himself that Cooper was an absolutely dependable person before consulting him, gave an exclamation of satisfaction at his promptness and departed. The capitalist watched the sunlight reflected from the back of his shining head as he went out of the door.

"Humph, that's a queer animal," he reflected, as he turned to consider a proposition made by the dictator who for the moment controlled the destinies of Costa Rica, relative to a search for the buried treasure of Cocos Island. "I wonder what the deuce he's really after. Perhaps it's only to put the kibosh on that other archeological sharp; but it's

the one best bet that he believes the Incas and Aztecs had the secret of a hair-restorer!"

II.

The vault to which Cooper returned the articles he had exhibited contained many curious things, for he was a man of varied interests. Neatly docketed papers arranged in orderly packages under the general headings of all the countries of the world held surprising reports of desperate adventure under the fierce sun of the equator, in the long arctic night, on the burning sands of the desert, in the tangle of tropical swamps and forests, and every other remote corner of the earth to which men might be lured by gold. In the terse and unromantic language of business, experiences weirder than any novelist had ever imagined were told in a cold, matter-of-fact way; for Cooper paid only for accurate information, and depended upon the magazines for his fiction. And, in spite of the fact that he was not a traveled man, there was no one better informed than he concerning the mysteries of far places which are beyond the ken of the ordinary globe-trotter.

It is doubtful if he had ever journeyed more than a thousand miles from his luxurious offices; but at his behest others had traveled every beaten path, and penetrated to many obscure and unknown places; and every one of those who returned added materially to his stock of information. It was not to contribute to the records of geographical societies, nor to further the work of cartographers that his emissaries departed on these missions, but primarily that they might reap the rewards which were offered by Cooper for good and faithful service; and secondarily that their employer might add the lion's share of the material gains to his already considerable fortune.

Many men were employed by the capitalist at one time and another, and they were often recruited from strange sources; but no one of them ever found that working for him was a sinecure. He could be absolutely relied upon to

carry out his part of any agreement which he might make; but the parties of the second part knew that he would do nothing for them beyond the strict letter of the agreement, and that after they had once drawn their advance money he would pay no further attention to them until they had made their final reports.

Sometimes these reports never came to hand; but it was an eloquent tribute to Cooper's judgment of human nature that the failure of the expedition and the death of his emissary were always coincident; for never in his long experience had his confidence been misplaced or betrayed. So long as the world revolves on its axis there will be men of adventurous dispositions and nomadic habits who will work more faithfully for others than they ever will for themselves; and it was from this class that he refilled the vacancies in his strangely assorted staff: Members of a Lost Legion they were, one and all; men who were content to make history without appearing in it, and to serve faithfully the hand which for the moment fed them. Few of them thought of making provision for old age; for the nature of their occupations rendered such provision superfluous; and with generous open-handedness they invariably squandered in a few weeks the fruits of many months of arduous toil in dangerous environment.

It was upon one Charles Coatsworth that Cooper decided as the likeliest man for his present purposes. Coatsworth was a young man who had proved his efficiency in a little matter which involved the escape of several political prisoners from Devil's Island; and, after being assured by the capitalist that it would be entirely useless for him to apply for life or accident-insurance, he introduced himself to Professor Jacob Schmidt at the pier the morning following that gentleman's interview with Cooper. He was young, he possessed perfect health, and above the ordinary allowance of good looks; and in his comparatively short career he had played more parts than fall to the lot of the average rolling-stone without dis-

proving the truth of the proverb which tells us that such gather no moss.

"But who wants to gather moss?" he had answered when his natural guardians had quoted that wise saw to him; and it was not until they had been absent three weeks from New York and he found himself hopelessly lost in the middle of an unexplored country with Professor Schmidt as sole companion, that a quiet and commonplace life seemed in the least attractive to him. The tree in which they were perched was comfortable enough as trees go; but the busy little coppered-colored men who were circling around beneath it seemed determined to get them out of it; and their experience of the past few days had taught them that they were persistent.

"Now, professor, it's about time for that wonderful pull with the Indians, of which you have told me, to get busy," remarked Coatsworth as he drew his head hastily behind the shelter of a branch just in time to escape an arrow which landed with a vicious thud in the trunk not three feet away. "I've done the vanishing-squirrel act around this limb until I'm clean played out; and if they ever get my range from two sides at once they'll make a pincushion of me."

The professor nodded and howled something in a language quite unintelligible to the Legioner; but the only reply was a flight of arrows from beneath, which made him shrivel into as small a compass as possible on the limb to which he clung.

"That is a good omen," he called to the Legioner. "It is a proof that the language of the Aztecs, at least, endures in this region; for it was in that tongue that I called to them and told them that they were thieves, murderers and sons of swine. You saw what an immediate response I received?"

"I did," answered the American dryly. "I'd like to remark right here, though, that I've heard that a soft answer turns away wrath. I suggest that you try 'em again, selecting something milder. I'm less interested at this moment in proving the existence of the

lost tribes than I am in keeping my skin unpunctured."

The professor answered with a grunt of disapproval, quickly followed by another of pain as an arrow at last found lodgment in an exposed portion of his anatomy. "Exact and reliable information is oftentimes only to be obtained at the price of physical discomfort," he answered as he withdrew the barb, the operation causing his hairless visage to become distorted with pain. "Let us hope that this arrow is not poisoned, or the chances that I may write down Joseph von Pumpnickel an ass are small. However, I will now a further experiment make."

He proceeded to shout something which sounded like an order from the waiter to the cook in a chop-suey restaurant, and the effect was magical; for instead of a flight of arrows there came an answering hail. Coatsworth listened impatiently to the conversation which followed between the professor and the Indian who was apparently the chief of their persecutors, regretting that a knowledge of Aztec was not among his accomplishments. A moment later the German prepared to slide down the tree-trunk; but when the Legioner would have followed he shouted to him to remain where he was.

"For me it makes no difference," he called out. "That arrow was poisoned, and if I don't go down now I'll fall in five minutes. He has the promise given that I shall not be harmed; but it is better that you wait and see that they do not my head cut off. The cacique promises that he will cure the wound."

Through the foliage Coatsworth watched curiously, revolver in hand. This was the first he had seen of the Indians of the interior, although for the past week they had made their presence felt. The guides whom they had brought with them from Izaguaykil had been mysteriously killed one by one, until the white men found themselves absolutely alone after penetrating the jungle for ten days; but they had been spared until this morning, when they had taken refuge in the tree on finding their camp surrounded by an

unknown tribe. They had not fired a shot in reply to the arrows which had been showered at them, for they realized the futility of resistance, and knew that their only chance lay in making terms. Now, however, Coatsworth was determined to kill as many as he could if harm were done to the professor; for in their journey he had developed a great liking for his only white companion.

Professor Schmidt had not exaggerated his influence with the Indians who came to Izaguaykil to trade. The buyers who were employed by the great dealers in precious stones to remain there on the chance of picking up the rare diamonds which the Indians brought in confessed frankly that if he should enter into competition with them their occupation would be gone; but to everything which concerned the making of money he seemed absolutely indifferent. For a scrap of paper, for any one of the curious pieces of ancient pottery, metal work or things not intrinsically valuable but which might throw light on the history of the people who produced them he was, however, as keen as a hawk. And every Indian who came from the interior, no matter how dirty or ignorant, was squeezed dry of all the information he would impart after the professor had loosened his tongue with pulque and maté.

Their affection for him was shown when he tried to organize their expedition; for they obstinately refused to accompany him, stating that he could never stand the hardships and escape the mysterious dangers at which they hinted only vaguely. It was only when he announced that if they would not guide him he would start alone with Coatsworth that they had given way and reluctantly consented to accompany them.

Aside from the hostility of invisible enemies the journey was arduous enough. The luxuriant vegetation seemed to obscure the trail in a day, so that constant machete work was necessary to clear it; and until they reached the foot-hills of the mountains the heat was so oppressive that exertion was

very wearying. The professor never complained and manfully did his part of the work, expatiating to Coatsworth as they traveled and rested in camp upon the inconceivable stupidity of the Herr Professor von Pumpnickel in denying the possibility of the continued existence of either the Incas or Aztecs, and citing the accumulated proofs which he had gathered to confound him.

Aside from that persistent and vigorous enmity, Professor Schmidt was kindness itself. He felt keenly the loss of the Indians who accompanied them, as one by one they were killed by the unseen enemies who harassed them from the third day out; and he cared tenderly for such of their followers as were wounded; but never for a moment did he consider the possibility of abandoning their expedition. As their carriers disappeared he cheerfully discarded the articles which his experience had taught him would minister to their comfort in the tropics, and assumed the greater part of the extra burden of the ammunition and medical supplies which were absolutely indispensable. His knowledge of botany stood them in good stead as their supplies ran low; and no matter how great the hardship of the trail or how discouraging their rate of progress he was always cheerful.

Even when they found themselves in this last desperate situation he gave no evidence of fear or discouragement. As they shinned up the vines which hung like ropes from the branches of the tree which was their refuge, he gave an exclamation of delight when he discovered that one of the arrows which hit the vine he was ascending was of a different character from any modern one he had ever seen, and was tipped with tempered copper.

"That," he remarked triumphantly as he perched himself on the first available limb, "is a proof that the knowledge of the Incas has been transmitted, and that these Indians have preserved their secrets. You will observe——"

"I observe that one of your pets is drawing a particularly careful bead on

you, and that you had better hustle," interrupted Coatsworth impatiently as he reached down and helped him to a branch higher up, just as another arrow landed on the spot he had vacated. "At the present time I am less interested in what their arrows are tipped with than I am in keeping out of their way; so we'll keep on climbing." Such had been their relationship since the moment they had set out. The professor had been absorbed, so far as the difficulties of the trail would allow, in the application of every circumstance to support his theory, and exerted himself only to serve others; while Coatsworth had kept a careful eye on him to see that he did not entirely neglect himself in his absorption and unselfishness.

The Legioner would not have thought of allowing him to descend alone had he not realized that his elevated position would probably allow him to serve him more effectually than if he were on the ground and a fair mark for arrows. They had agreed that their revolvers—the only arms which they retained—were to be used only as a last resort, and the professor was apparently quite oblivious that he himself carried one as he slid to the ground. He landed on his feet and looked fearlessly at the cacique who was waiting to receive him, while Coatsworth kept the Indian covered with his revolver, ready to shoot at the first sign of treachery. The professor was apparently not in the least afraid, and with the courtesy which was so natural to him he raised in salute the broad Panama which was jammed on his head.

The effect was magical; for as the sunlight filtering through the dense foliage was reflected from his shining and nodular cranium the cacique groveled at his feet and made every sign of submission. The professor was evidently as surprised as the Legioner at the result; but when in answer to a question the Indian groveled all the harder and mumbled out a reply which sounded like a prayer, he looked up at the tree and gave a shout of triumph.

"It's all right," he called. "They think that I am a reincarnation of——" The rest of his remark was drowned by a concerted howl from the other Indians, who swarmed about him and also groveled; but before Coatsworth could climb from his limb to a vine to descend the Indians had risen to their feet at a command from the chief, and raising the professor on their shoulders they started off on a rapid dog-trot into the jungle. He shouted back something which was doubtless meant to be encouraging; but in the babel of tongues about him it was lost; and a moment later, when Coatsworth's feet were once more on the earth, he found himself alone, unmolested, but absolutely lost in the center of a vast, unknown wilderness.

III.

It required only five minutes of pursuit on the part of Coatsworth to convince him that such a procedure was absolutely hopeless. The Indians, inured by long practise to travel in the jungle, could penetrate, even with their burden, through places where he could hardly force a way; and they were undoubtedly traveling ten feet to his one. He knew how easy it would be for him to lose his bearings and be unable to return to their last camping-place if he went farther into the jungle; and, indeed, he found it no easy task to locate it when he tried to retrace his steps. He did find it finally, however, and sitting down with his back against the tree which had been their refuge he proceeded to take stock of the situation.

Unless the professor should be able to rejoin him the outlook was sufficiently unpromising; for he was almost destitute of food, his sole weapon consisted of a revolver, and he knew that unguided he could never make his way back to Izaguaykil, while the other settlements along the frontier of civilization were even farther away. They had counted upon diplomacy and conciliation rather than force to enable them to make their explorations and investigations; for the nature of the country would have made an armed in-

vasion impossible. Of roads there had been none; and until they had reached the plateau on which they had traveled for the past two days they had been in a particularly unwholesome and malarious country.

"This conciliation game is all right, when there is any one to conciliate and you get a chance to play it; but the best and kindest intentions in the world won't keep me from starving to death right now," he reflected as the intense loneliness of the forest in the noonday hush came over him. At night there had at least been the howling of the wild animals; in the mornings there were the songs of the birds and in the evening the hum of myriads of insects; but at noon the jungle is absolutely silent, and Coatsworth found that silence so depressing that he would have welcomed even hostile company to have broken it.

"I know the professor will get back to me if he has the chance; but that chance seems a little remote, while it is just big enough to keep me here," he continued, putting his thoughts into words for the sake of company. "I could leave a note for him if I could only describe where I was going; but one part of this piece of woods looks so much like another that my descriptive powers are not up to it."

Inaction, however, is distasteful to any man with a temperament which fits him for membership in the Lost Legion; and Coatsworth was about to rise from the ground to explore in the immediate vicinity of the camping-place when an arrow whizzed through the air and buried itself in the tree-trunk behind him. It was followed by others in quick succession; and although he felt no pain he was powerless to move, and it was a little time before he realized that he was untouched, the arrows having simply transfixed his stout khaki tunic, and fastened him as firmly to the tree as if he had been bound.

The archer who had shot the arrows was invisible. But when the bushes which surrounded the clearing parted Coatsworth would have rubbed his eyes in astonishment if he could have

raised his hands to his face. From them stepped cautiously and with threatening arrow drawn to the head a woman; but for the moment Coatsworth could see nothing feminine about the face which looked at him so defiantly. It was pretty, with regular and well-cut features, and an olive complexion as clear as amber; but the eyes were threatening, and the small hands held the wicked-looking bow and arrow in a thoroughly masculine manner. She advanced cautiously toward him, her small feet encased in delicate white moccasins which made not the slightest sound on the soft earth. After assuring herself that the other arrows had rendered him powerless she lowered the one which she had kept persistently pointed at his breast.

Coatsworth, in spite of his own helplessness, felt relieved that he at last had company; and when the woman's lips parted in a smile he realized that she was disposed to be friendly and that her archery had been simply a precautionary measure. For the first time he allowed himself really to take stock of her; and although he appreciated the fact that her costume might have seemed incongruous in civilization, it was eminently suited to the jungle. Above all, it was most peculiarly adapted to her style of beauty.

Delicate skins dyed in soft colors and embroidered in gold thread and brilliant feathers formed a loose skirt which came to her knees; a tight-fitting bodice of a soft cloth resembling silk gave perfect freedom to the shapely, bare arms, and a handsome quiver containing a half-dozen arrows swung at her waist from a wide baldric over her right shoulder. Great braids of jet-black hair were wound about her head; and fastened to them by a clasp containing a single diamond of monstrous size and blue luster was a plume such as the Legioner had never seen before. A tiny trumpet of chased ivory, mounted with beautifully worked gold hung from her belt. This she took in her hand when she replaced the arrow in the quiver and slung the bow over her shoulder.

Standing in front of him she addressed him in a language which to him was entirely unintelligible, but which he judged to be the same which the professor had used in addressing the Indians. Her expression and tone were both so friendly, however, that he was reassured. And he smiled in return as he shook his head and glanced reproachfully at the arrows which pinned him to the tree. She laughed as she shook her head to signify that she would not unloose him. Seating herself opposite to him she examined him as critically as if he were some rare and curious specimen which she had made captive.

"My dear young lady—or princess, I suppose I should say; for it is always a princess in this kind of a fairy-tale—I can assure you that I am a perfectly harmless individual, and I'll promise to be good if you'll turn me loose," he said. She laughed, and shrugged her pretty shoulders to let him know that she did not understand. On both sides there was all the will in the world to comprehend each other, however, and youth under the influence of a possible warmer attachment than friendship is more ingenious in translation than age with all its knowledge.

In a few minutes she had made him understand by the use of signs with her pretty hands and graceful arms that it was not fear for herself, but a dread that he might run away, which made her keep him prisoner. She even withdrew the arrows which fastened one sleeve that he might answer in the same way. Coatsworth's first use of his partial freedom was to seize her hand before she could withdraw it and to raise it to his lips; and while she promptly replied by boxing his ears with the other, her blows were not sufficiently hard to cause him serious inconvenience, and her laughing eyes belied the pouting of her full, red lips.

"My dear—I use that form of expression because I am ignorant of your own name—there is nothing farther from my thoughts than a wish to escape from you," he said. And so effectually did he use his eyes and his one

free arm that she understood him. "I haven't the least idea where I should go, and now that you have come to me I find this the pleasantest part of the jungle. I find that this position is getting cramped, though, so I'll try to loosen myself, unless you will do it for me." As he finished speaking he reached over and grasped one of the arrows which held him, watching her narrowly and half expecting to be threatened again by its fellow from her quiver.

The girl had understood enough of his helplessness and loneliness to know a trick worth two of that, and she simply ran to the edge of the clearing and disappeared in the bushes. A moment later her laughing face reappeared, and she motioned to him with expressive gestures that if he persisted in regaining his liberty she would run off and leave him. Coatsworth suddenly lost all interest in freedom, and signified his submission by holding his one free hand open above his head.

"Maya!" said the girl, pointing significantly to herself when she had accepted his surrender and reappeared in the clearing. And then, pointing to him, she raised her delicate eyebrows in interrogation.

"Maya!" answered Coatsworth, pointing to her. Then, putting his hand on his breast, he bowed and said "Charley." She repeated it, softening the opening "Ch" just the least little bit until the "Sharley" seemed to fall caressingly from her lips. The Legioner acknowledged to himself that never had his name sounded so pleasantly from any others.

"Sharley darling, my intimates might call me, and we are getting fairly well acquainted," he continued when she had so far mastered the first word. Maya being naturally quick, it was but a moment until she had mastered the addition, and "Sharley darling" as pronounced by her comforted him wonderfully, even in his present helpless position.

Coatsworth would have willingly prolonged the lesson; for he found the girl an apt pupil at English and a skil-

ful teacher of her own language; but just as he had acquired the names of several parts of his own anatomy in her tongue and in turn imparted to her the equivalent English terms embellished by many adjectives such as "beautiful," "charming," "ravishing," etc., his teacher-pupil jumped to her feet and motioning to him to be silent listened attentively.

He could hear nothing; but the more delicate ears of Maya were apparently better trained. Quickly ordering him to return his free arm to his side she strung her bow and placed an arrow on the string. Then, when she had again pinned it helplessly to his side she followed it with three others which made him more helpless than he had been before. Raising the ivory trumpet to her lips she blew a call of three clear notes. The noon hush still hung over the jungle; but the music of her bugle had hardly died away before it was answered by another from afar, repeating the same notes but with a harsher tone.

She listened attentively until the call was finished; evidently measuring the exact distance from which it came; and then, as if assured that she had a few minutes of grace, she made every possible gesture to indicate her protection of the helpless man before she again fitted an arrow to her bow and faced him in an attitude of menace. She was an admirable actress, and the Legioner would have felt little comfort in the situation when he looked into the stern, set face if he had not had the previous assurance of her good-will. Even now his heart beat a trifle faster when his good-natured wink of comprehension brought no softening of her expression. A moment later he had proof that her promised protection was a very valuable asset, however, for as noiselessly as she herself had come a band of twenty heavily armed men appeared in the clearing.

Their leader, a tall, handsome Indian, gave one glance at Maya, who stood like a graven image, her arrow threatening her prisoner, and then with a cry of rage sprang forward with the copper-pointed spear which he carried

raised threateningly. Quicker than a cat Maya jumped between him and her prisoner and facing about threatened her would-be rescuer with the arrow. Coatsworth had not made sufficient progress in the language to understand the words of the argument which ensued; but a deaf man could have comprehended its purport.

The girl evidently claimed him as the legitimate captive of her bow and skill, and refused to allow them to despatch him summarily, as they very evidently wished to do; but remembering the revolver at his hip he determined to break loose that he might aid her if her own efforts were unavailing. As a matter of fact his helplessness had been more apparent than real, and he had submitted to it more to flatter her than because he could not break away; for one wrench gave him sufficient freedom to enable him to wriggle out of the tunic, and in an instant he stood beside her, his revolver in one hand, while he raised the other as a sign for an armistice.

Maya gave a little cry of dismay as she saw that he was at liberty, and in an instant every spear was raised against him; but he quickly dropped on one knee; and while he kept the leader covered with his revolver, he reached out his free hand and grasped that of the girl. She made no effort to restrain him as he raised it to his lips, and then pressed it against his forehead in token of his submission to her. Instead of boxing his ears as she had done before she looked defiantly at the Indians and uttered a sharp command. All but their leader seemed to be impressed; but his face darkened and the spear quivered above his head, while from his lips came something which assuredly was not a benediction.

Coatsworth would have been spared considerable trouble if the finger which tightened on the trigger of his revolver had pulled a fraction of an ounce harder; but at that moment a man sprang between himself and the Indian, and struck the spear from the latter's hand. He was followed by others. The Legioner had just time to elevate

the muzzle so that the bullet sped safely and harmlessly above their heads; for he had recognized the cacique who had commanded the party which bore the professor away. He half expected that the report of the shot would terrify the Indians; but they paid no attention to it, and were immediately absorbed in a long speech which the newcomer made, and which he emphasized by producing an imposing-looking document from the folds of his tunic. Before that they groveled on the earth as the others had done to the professor; and Maya looked on wonderingly as the cacique turned to her prisoner and with a deep obeisance handed him a letter.

It was a note from the professor, stating that he was well and that he had fallen on his feet, but giving no further particulars except that he was now in a position to write down the Herr Professor von Pumpnickel as an ass in each and every one of the many languages at his command. "The bearer of this will bring you to me under safe-conduct, so have no fear," it concluded. "Do not be surprised if you find me in somewhat greater state than when you saw me last; for I am supposed to be the reincarnation of a former great philosopher and lawgiver of the nation who was called Izaquatz—and I'm not sure that they're wrong."

"Humph, he looks the part," assented the Legioner as he folded up the letter and slipped it into the pocket of the tunic which the cacique held respectfully for him; and then, before he could make protest, he was deftly hoisted on the shoulders of four Indians and carried off rapidly into the jungle.

IV.

Coatsworth was helpless in the strong grasp of his captors; but so well accustomed were they to their task that they restrained him without hurting him. And after the first brief struggle he resigned himself not unwillingly to the pleasantest method of jungle travel he had yet experienced. Before they left the clearing he saw that he was not to be removed without a protest from

Maya, whose flashing eyes and scowling brows gave her a certain resemblance in the savage surroundings to an animal robbed of its prey. The cacique quieted her with words which had a ring of authority in spite of the deference of his manner, and the Legioner noted with considerable inward satisfaction that she passed them on in a fortified version to the leader of the party who had been so anxious to perforate him with his spear, omitting to soften them by any deference of tone or manner, finally flinging away into the jungle in another direction and leaving her escort to follow meekly after.

Coatsworth had plenty of time for reflection as his bearers trotted along; for, although nothing which could be dignified with the name of a trail was apparent to him, they went steadily forward in the line of least resistance but in the same general direction, making nothing of difficulties which would have seemed almost insurmountable to a white man.

He noticed that they were of an entirely different race from the spearmen who had answered Maya's summons; short and stocky of build, and with faces closely resembling the Indians of the Northern prairies in the high cheekbones, prominent noses and sharp, black eyes. Their dress, too—what there was of it—was that of the primitive savages and without the slightest attempt at uniformity, the large expanses of uncovered skin robbed of the suggestion of nakedness by elaborate tattooing in complicated and interwoven designs of fish, animals, grotesque human beings and foliage.

Maya's escort had been composed of men taller and slighter of frame, lighter of complexion and with more delicate features; and, while their dress and equipment might have attracted undue attention on Broadway from its peculiarity, they were eminently adapted to the environment in which he had seen them. Both in costume and arms there was uniformity; the costume in each case consisted of a loose smock tunic of neutral-colored woolen cloth, with

regular designs embroidered in silver thread, and drawn in at the waist by a serviceable belt of leather.

Leather leggings rose from the moccasined feet well above the knee, affording protection from the attacks of the venomous serpents and the thorns of the undergrowth, and on their heads were casques of burnished copper, each ornamented by a single eagle feather. Their spears and shields were of uniform design and beautiful workmanship; while from the belt of each hung a keen-edged, copper-headed hatchet, and a quiver of arrows tipped with the same metal for use with the long bows which swung at their backs. They were a sort of Robin Hood, Sherwood Forest bunch.

But the men of his escort, in contrast, might have come out of a Black-foot teepee, except that they would have brought their squaws to do the hard work, he reflected. Then motioning for the cacique to trot alongside him, he tried to question him in the limited vocabulary he had acquired from Maya. As that was composed principally of substantives and adjectives of endearment, the attempt was not very successful; but it was quickly interrupted by a sharp challenge from in front which caused his bearers to stop so abruptly that he nearly shot out of their grasp. No one was visible; but Coatsworth caught an occasional bright flash in the jungle, as if a stray ray of sunshine was reflected from a bright weapon; and he was well satisfied when he was lowered from the elevated position which made him a shining mark to the comparative safety of the ground.

The cacique was quick to answer the challenge, shouting something which apparently was a password, for a moment later they were surrounded by a band of spearmen very like those from whom the Legioner had been taken. Their leader, after casting a sharp glance at him, gave an order which caused his late bearers to disappear into the jungle as if they were glad to be rid of the job, while one of the newcomers stepped quietly on each side of

him. There was nothing threatening in their manner; but Coatsworth glanced casually at their very business-like equipment of deadly weapons; and when the leader motioned to him to walk on he obeyed unhesitatingly, the cacique grinning encouragingly as he nodded and waved his good-by.

He thought a little regretfully of his former bearers as he stumbled over fallen logs, tripped on creeping vines, and sank deep in unsuspected mire which was treacherously concealed by moss; but his trials were short, for less than ten minutes brought them to his first great surprise in his exploration—a broad, solidly built and carefully surfaced road in the very heart of this unknown and mysterious jungle. "And as roads like this don't run from nowhere to no place, we should be getting somewhere pretty quick," he said to himself hopefully as his escort started him along at a pace which soon left him little breath.

The road was well traveled, but both the human beings and animals were strange to the American's eyes. His escort was evidently composed of trained and disciplined men; but those they met or passed on their rapid march were people of the country, peasants driving strange sheeplike animals laden with produce, and droves of pigs of an unknown breed and unusual formation; while here and there huge, fat oxen drew high-wheeled carts with great blocks of cut stone on the low bodies. Once they met an imposing cavalcade of horsemen, in its midst a litter borne by two large and gaily caparisoned white mules; but before he had time to observe the details he was deftly tripped and thrown to the ground, one of his guards placing a hand on the back of his neck and keeping his face pressed against the earth until the litter and its escort, with much jingling of sweet-toned bells, had passed from sight.

Coatsworth was inclined to resent the treatment until he saw that the position which had been so rudely forced upon him had been voluntarily assumed by all the members of the party, and the

leader with expressive gestures explained that failing that their heads would have been separated from their bodies.

Except for that experience and the rapid pace that was forced upon him—and which his escort apparently regarded as the normal rate of travel—there was nothing of which he could complain; for they gave him pleasant and cooling drink from the canteens which they carried, such tobacco as he had never before smoked, and food which after days of jungle fare was most grateful to his palate. And their attitude in all ways was friendly and protective; but Coatsworth was by nature loquacious and inquisitive, and the absence of conversation was a sad deprivation after the first novelty of the new surroundings had worn off.

The road ascended constantly; but so perfect had been the engineering that the grade was almost imperceptible. It often ran for considerable distances through skilfully constructed tunnels; again it was hewn in the face of a cliff with a sickening abyss on the far side; but always far ahead he could see a narrow slit in the mountains with sheer, shining walls on either side. This seemed to be their objective.

He saw that every bridge and narrow passageway was commanded by square towers of massive masonry garrisoned by men habited like his escort, who watched with vigilant, jealous eyes the passers-by; but at a signal from the leader they were allowed to trot past without halting, and none offered to delay them until they came opposite the great cleft into which the road disappeared.

Flanking the entrance were two enormous forts surrounded by wide moats through which a mountain torrent raced; and straight across the road was a yawning chasm, many hundreds of feet deep and at least fifty wide. The walls of the forts, built of great blocks of stone so accurately cut that they were laid without mortar, were more than eighty feet in height; and from the number of men whom the Legioner saw maneuvering on the top he judged

them to be of tremendous thickness; but the thing which most impressed him was that the sides toward him were festooned with strings of white objects which in the distance he had taken for bouquets of flowers. But on closer inspection he saw that they were grinning human skulls, and his hand instinctively crept to the pocket of his tunic for the comforting touch of the professor's reassuring letter.

Groups of the country people were waiting patiently before the impassable chasm, clustered by the roadside, and cooking simple meals or laughing and talking, oblivious to the ghastly and suggestive ornamentation of the fortresses frowning above them, and apparently content to wait for a miracle to waft them across. But the leader of the Legioner's escort made his way through them with scant ceremony; pushing them aside roughly when they did not make way and using the butt of his spear as mercilessly as would a New York policeman his stick.

A shrill call from his trumpet was answered by another from the walls, words almost inaudible above the roaring of the torrent followed, and then a narrow foot-bridge swung across the chasm, lowered by invisible mechanism from where it had rested against an angle of the fortress wall. The Legioner watched apprehensively the officer who crossed to them; for the bridge was not more than two feet wide and unprotected by railings; but he ran as indifferently as if he were on solid earth, and paid not the slightest attention to his foothold. Even after his safe arrival Coatsworth was hopeful that some flaw might be discovered in their credentials to prevent their crossing; but after the exchange of a dozen words between the two officers and the exhibition and inspection of an official-looking document, the signal was given to go forward, and he gingerly essayed the perilous crossing.

The length of that narrow strip of bridge seemed to have multiplied a hundredfold before he reached the middle; it sagged and swayed ominously from the weight of their party; and he

would gladly have finished the rest of the journey on his hands and knees. But his guards evidently saw nothing unusual in the passage, and the one behind him hastened his progress with words which he did not know the meaning of but which bore an unmistakable likeness in purport to the "Step lively!" of the "L" conductors.

His knees were knocking together when he reached firm ground once more; but when he turned to look back at the danger he had escaped he saw that one of the peasants had grown impatient at the delay and attempted to follow them across. Already the cables which controlled the bridge were tightening to raise it again; but he grasped the officer in command by the arm and pointed to the man who had already reached the middle. He gave one glance and shrugged his shoulders indifferently, but issued no order to delay the raising. A moment later it swung into the air, there was a wild shriek from the poor wretch, who clutched desperately at it for an instant, and then went whirling to his death below.

For a moment Coatsworth was tempted to use the revolver which had been left to him; to make one desperate effort to escape from his captors and trust to luck rather than to the mercy of those capable of such wanton cruelty; but he realized how absolutely futile such an attempt would be when his sharp eyes took in the details of his surroundings. Even if he escaped death at the hands of his own escort he saw that the frowning walls on either side were lined by ranks of men who watched him with curious and vigilant eyes. And it would have meant running a gantlet more than a hundred yards long and facing he knew not what at the other end.

"I'll have to put it off; but if the professor has taken on the job of law-giver, I'll use my pull to get an amendment to the penal code that'll fix that brute," he thought grimly, answering with a scowl the salute of the officer, which was the signal that they might go forward. It was not encouraging that none of his escort seemed to re-

gard the incident as unusual or deplorable, and apparently it was of common occurrence; for it had created no excitement among the waiting peasants on the farther bank; but it indicated a callousness to human suffering and sacrifice in his captors which was not pleasant to a man absolutely in their power.

He was given little time for reflection, however, for his escort hurried him along the road through the cleft in the mountains; and then he realized how fruitless must have been any effort to escape; for on either side the smooth cliffs were honeycombed with passages, and at intervals of about twenty feet squads of armed men were stationed behind breastworks in the windowlike openings. Far above great masses of rock were balanced so precariously on platforms that he knew a touch would send them down to crush anything on the road below; and beside each one stood a sentinel, armed with a crowbar in place of the customary spear and bow.

"I reckon Mr. Cooper loses, if this is the crib he's sent me to crack single-handed," said the Legioner grimly to himself as he surveyed the narrow pass which even these primitively armed soldiers could have held against an army equipped with modern artillery. "It's up to the professor to get busy on his lawmaking, and devise something which will give my respected employer a monopoly—— Holy Moses! What's this!" His exclamation was called forth when he turned a sharp corner of the pass; for the walls which had shut out the sunshine for the past two miles came to an abrupt end; and in front of him, surrounded on all sides by high, sheer cliffs, was a great circular valley. The landscape bathed in the bright tropical sunshine was as beautiful as any the eyes of man had ever looked upon.

The Legioner would have pressed on, but his guards restrained him with no gentle hands; and then in front of them across the road he saw a golden cord, the only barrier in their way, but evidently as greatly respected by his com-

panions as had been the sterner measures in the pass by himself.

For a good quarter of an hour they stood there in absolute silence, the soldiers leaning on their spears and looking longingly at the fair country before them; but that slight cord of gold which a woman's shears might have severed seemed more effectual than would have been walls of stone to keep them from the paradise beyond. After days in the jungle with its terrors and hardships and the passage through the narrow, gloomy cañon where grim death seemed to threaten at every step it was, indeed, a paradise spread out before them; the graceful tropical foliage surrounded by high walls with snow-capped mountains beyond, dark masses of pine and cedar forest clothing their sides to the timber-line.

In the center of the valley was a great lake, its water as blue as the Mediterranean; the many islands which dotted its surface occupied by buildings so beautiful in form and fanciful in construction that they seemed like the edifices of a fairy-land. In the pass everything had evidenced the preparation for strife and combat; but here all was peace. Groups of men wandered about in the great fields of green which led to the water's edge; and on a leveled platform of turf others danced to the sweet music of reedlike instruments; but Coatsworth noticed that the men carried no arms, and that on their heads rested wreaths of flowers instead of the more warlike casques worn by the soldiers of his escort. No one paid the slightest attention to them; for pleasure and idle gaiety seemed the order of the day; and gradually, after the first bewilderment had passed, his eyes took in the details—an inspection which later on was to stand him in good stead.

About in the middle of the lake, which was about five miles across, was the biggest of the islands, perhaps a square mile in extent. On it, too, were the most imposing of the buildings, and from their midst rose a great pyramid of dazzling white stone, its gilded apex shining like fire in the fierce sunlight. The feathery tops of tall palm-trees,

indicated gardens or plantations on the island; but from where they stood its shores presented only a continuous wall of stone as white as Parian marble, pierced by many fancifully shaped windows and great arched doorways through which throngs of people passed to and from the canopied barges which conveyed them to the other islands.

One of these islands seemed to be carefully shunned by all the boats; and the Legioner, watching it carefully for the reason of it, saw a small canoe shoot from a somber water-gate in its solid wall; two hooded figures paddling it swiftly toward them, while another sat idly in the center. The other boats hastily made way as it approached the shore; and when the passenger disembarked and came up the path toward him he noticed that the people drew away and avoided looking at him.

It was this tall, unarmed man who first deigned to notice them; and Coatsworth watched him curiously as he approached. His bare head was shaven until it was smooth as the bald pate of the professor, and his face also was innocent of hirsute adornment and was not pleasant to look at. The long nose of the fanatic, the thin, cruel lips of the tyrant, and the cold crafty eyes of the intriguer stamped his calling on it; and the Legioner was not surprised when the officer and soldiers prostrated themselves while they addressed him as *pabas*, which he knew was the Aztec equivalent of the Spanish *padre*. The man glanced at the prostrate soldiers with a haughty and contemptuous indifference; but active and determined malevolence was in his eyes when he regarded the Legioner, taking in every detail of his appearance as he scanned him from head to foot.

There was a cruel smile on his lips when he lowered the golden cord and motioned to him to step across it; but while the soldiers accepted his curt dismissal and left without once looking toward him, Coatsworth stared in frank defiance straight into the cold eyes as he crossed the barrier into the territory which had hitherto been forbidden ground.

V.

As the two men walked toward the boat-landing together Coatsworth noticed that all of those whom they met passed with averted eyes; or, if they observed their approach in time, withdrew entirely from the path. The women were almost without exception handsome, and fairer of skin than the soldiers who had formed his escort; and while they were short of stature, their figures were well rounded and graceful. The men were decidedly effeminate in appearance, delicate of feature and slight of build; and their very apparent timidity in the presence of the *pabas* gave the Legioner but little respect for their courage. The wreaths of flowers which they wore on their heads and their long mantles of white cloth added to the illusion of femininity; and he mentally concluded that he had little to fear from them, while his hand crept to the revolver in his holster, which he felt would make him more than a match for his companion.

"Is that a Colt or a Smith & Wesson which you have there? I see that you have not been foolish enough to bring an automatic to the tropics," remarked the *pabas*, whose sharp glance had followed the movement of the hand which Coatsworth, with a rather sheepish expression, let fall quickly to his side.

"It's a .45—great Scott, where did you learn English?" He had been so absorbed in his own thoughts that the question had at first seemed perfectly natural, and he had answered mechanically.

"All knowledge comes to us; even that of the languages of the outer world," answered the *pabas*, with a grim smile which did not enhance his beauty. "When you entered the Pass of Security you undoubtedly noted the decorations on the walls of the fortresses." Coatsworth nodded assent, and the *pabas'* face was that of a cat who plays with a mouse when he continued.

"Many races have contributed to those festoons," he said significantly. "Adventurers of all countries have at-

tempted to intrude upon the privacy of the Vale of Tranquillity, and from them we have acquired languages, news of the latest discoveries, and even the gossip of foreign places. Their stay among us has been measured by the amount they had to impart; for after their heads were emptied they were of no use save for decorative purposes." He paused a moment, and critically examined the closely cropped, well-shaped head of the Legioner. "I trust that you have not neglected the opportunities of your youth to acquire much learning?" he concluded solicitously.

"If I hadn't, there would have been no necessity for me to butt into your Vale of Tranquillity," answered Coatsworth dubiously. "If my head stays on my shoulders only long enough for you to pump useful information out of it, you'll be sucking air after about three strokes of the piston." The *pabas*' glance shifted from his head to his neck with disconcerting promptness, and again the Legioner's hand crept toward his revolver. "There's one thing I have accumulated which may serve about as well, though," he continued hopefully. "I have a strong pull with a certain god named Izaquatz." The *pabas* gave an involuntary start, which proved that the random shot had gone home; but his face was not pleasant to look at as he motioned to the American to take his place in the waiting canoe.

"I should advise you not to build too much on that," he said, grinning maliciously after a few powerful strokes from the arms of the hooded figures had sent it away from the landing. "The divine utterances of the gods are unintelligible to the common ears; and it is we, the *pabas* brotherhood, who interpret them."

"And you take advantage of your position to 'work' the oracle—that's about it, I reckon?" said Coatsworth. The prompt nod of acquiescence from the *pabas* lowered his estimate of the value of the professor's safe-conduct about fifty per cent. "Now see here; I'd like to call your attention to the fact that I didn't voluntarily trespass on your preserves," said Coatsworth, "I

was brought here by express order of the god Izaquatz, and I want to see him."

"The god Izaquatz is the fountain-head of all knowledge, and you will be devoted to his service," answered the *pabas* consolingly. "You will know all in due time." The topic was evidently so distasteful that he relapsed into silence for the remainder of the voyage, during which the Legioner noticed the same effort to avoid them on the part of the many boats which traversed the lake that the people on shore had manifested. The islands which they passed on either side seemed full of life and merriment, and snatches of song, laughter and music floated across the water from the openings in the walls which in every case rose from the water's edge; but the one to which they were heading lay somber and quiet, its solid ramparts of neutral gray giving no reflection from the afternoon sun, and there was no opening to relieve the monotony save one arched water-gate. Even that opening was closed by curtains of heavy black cloth which swept the surface; and as the prow of the canoe parted them Coatsworth thought that a wailing chorus of pity floated after them from the other boats.

"Welcome to the Island of Atone-ment," said the *pabas*, breaking his silence as the curtains shut out the outer sunlight behind them, and the canoe glided into a basin enclosed by high stone walls, and the paddlers hooked onto a landing-stage from which a narrow door gave the only exit. "You have come far to discover the lost glories of Anhuac; behold, you are at the threshold of the inner sanctuary, where dwell only those who mourn for them until such time as they shall be restored." The fierce light of fanaticism was in his eyes as he spoke; Coatsworth, watching him remembered uneasily the tales the professor had told him of the customs of the Aztecs, the barbarous cruelty of their priests and the endless stream of human victims whom they sacrificed to their ancient gods. He put as good a face upon it as he could muster, however, and re-

mained seated in the canoe after the *pabas* had stepped to the stone platform.

"Is this where Izaquatz hangs out?" he asked, not stirring when the *pabas* motioned to him to follow.

"No, but still you must come with me," was the stern answer. "It would be small sign of respect to the most honored and ancient of our gods to appear before him without the ceremony of purification; but no harm shall come to you—yet." There was an ominous pause before the last word; but the Legioner made no sign and looked ruefully at his travel-stained clothes.

"I reckon you're right; a bath and a new outfit won't hurt me," he answered; and with a mental reservation that his cartridge-belt and revolver should be transferred to the fresh costume he followed the *pabas* through the archway. The building which they entered was as cheerless as a prison; for the only attempt at ornamentation on the bare walls were sculptured representations of serpents and particularly unprepossessing gods; the same designs were repeated with tiresome monotony of hideousness as they passed through room after room and traversed long corridors.

Coatsworth tried to keep track of the direction, and counted his paces; but they took so many turnings and twists that he was soon hopelessly confused. Not another human being did they meet, and no sound came through the thick walls to remind him of the life and gaiety in the sunshine without; but once a terrible wail of agony came from somewhere in the inner precincts, and he stopped abruptly and placed his back against the wall.

"I rather think the god Izaquatz won't object to seeing me in my present condition," he said when the *pabas* looked at him inquiringly. "I don't know when I'm liable to run into a whole bunch of *pabas*, and I reckon we'll settle this right here. You're bigger than I am; but they say out West that Sam Colt made all men the same size, and I'll drill you if there's any funny business."

"I see that there are certain idioms of your tongue with which I am unacquainted, so that after all you have something to teach me," answered the *pabas* tranquilly. "I have told you that you need be under no immediate apprehension."

"What is that noise?" demanded the Legioner sharply, as again the piercing shriek rang through the building, and the *pabas* shrugged his shoulders indifferently.

"In time you will know all," he answered. "Now you must come with me, and I am loath to use force. But"—Coatsworth suddenly found himself impelled with no inconsiderable momentum into the middle of the room—"perhaps that little demonstration will convince you that it is available." Revolver in hand the Legioner had whirled to see who had shoved him from behind; but only a peculiarly hideous sculptured god was visible where his back had rested solidly against the wall. The *pabas* looked at him with a smile of derision on his lips as he returned the weapon to its holster.

"I reckon that if your graven images fight for you I'll have to be good," he acknowledged, a little shiver running down his spinal column in spite of his bold front. "They're too many for me; but don't forget that you're not made of stone." The *pabas* demonstrated his indifference by contemptuously turning his back and leading the way; and Coatsworth, with one revengeful glance at the graven image which seemed to leer derisively in return, followed on.

"You see that I keep faith," announced his guide when he finally ushered him into a plain but comfortably furnished room lighted only by a glazed opening in the roof. "In the next room you will find a bath; and after you have cleansed yourself clean raiment will be provided, and a repast. After that you will be conducted to the god Izaquatz at such time as he may desire your presence. I may say that you will even be allowed to retain your revolver, although in the Vale of Tranquillity none go armed save those upon whom

the gods have bestowed weapons against which your puny efforts would be powerless."

"Meaning the *pabas*?"

"Who else?" answered the *pabas* with a crafty smile; and then, even while the Legioner kept his eyes fixed on him, trying to read what was passing in his mind, he suddenly vanished, apparently melting into the air. Coatsworth rubbed his eyes in astonishment, and then carefully examined the walls and floor for secret traps or doors; but he could find nothing to explain the mystery of the sudden disappearance. He finally gave it up as hopeless and devoted himself to his toilet. When he came from his bath his own clothes had been removed, and in place of them were garments such as he had seen on the men in the valley; but when he was arrayed in them he flattered himself that he looked more of a man than any of them.

His revolver had been left ostentatiously on a stool beside the clothes; a rigid examination proved that neither it nor the ammunition had been tampered with; but he regarded it doubtfully as he thought of how little use it would be against a man who had the power to evaporate at will. The surprises of the apartment were not exhausted, however; for when he turned from a further examination of the walls he found a bountifully spread table in the center of the room, although he had heard no sound.

Darkness fell as he ate; but a strange illumination came through the skylight above him, and throwing himself down on a couch he tried to figure out an explanation of all the things which had puzzled him in that eventful day; but before he had got farther than wondering why the appearance of the professor's bald head had produced such an impression on the Indians he fell into a deep sleep. When he awakened it was daylight again, and beside the couch stood the *pabas*, the same crafty smile on his face that he had worn before he disappeared.

"So you've materialized again, have you?" said Coatsworth, sitting up and

rubbing his eyes. "It looks to me as if I had been doped."

"Hours spent in pleasant sleep are not lost," answered the *pabas*, grinning. "Yes, I insured them to you—it was in the wine; but now the god Izaquatz calls for you. Come." Nothing loath, the American followed him, retracing their long passage of yesterday and again entering the canoe.

"He doesn't live here, then?" he asked, and the *pabas* shook his head.

"None but those who mourn the lost glories of Anhuac dwell on the Island of Atonement—except those who come to carry our messages to the gods," he answered gloomily. "Izaquatz, when he dwelt with our forefathers, was a lover of gaiety as well as of wisdom. Now that he has returned to dwell among us it is not meet that he should live where every one is devoted to penance—or sacrifice—but in such surroundings as he knew before, ministered to by beauty, soothed by sweet music, and amused by the companionship of the light-hearted."

"Me for Izaquatz's environment!" exclaimed the Legioner enthusiastically. "I don't want to appear unappreciative; but I think this place might get on my nerves. You can't lead me to the wine-women-and-song place too quick to suit me."

The *pabas* looked at him disapprovingly; but he was apparently under orders which he dared not disobey, and they soon landed at the largest island.

"Coney Island on a busy Sunday without the barkers," thought Coatsworth as they made their way through the principal thoroughfare, which led from the great water-gate. The street was thronged with people who were evidently bent on pleasure; for all were laughing, singing, dancing and care-free, while not even the lowering visage of the *pabas* seemed to disconcert them. The name of Izaquatz was frequently repeated, and he saw that the people were all moving in the same general direction, toward a high-domed building near the center of the island. To this the *pabas* also led him, harshly ordering the people to make way; and

when Coatsworth would have lingered, attracted by a laughing eye or inviting smile, he sternly reminded him that the god Izaquatz could not wait his convenience.

The clang of many cymbals, the blare of hundreds of trumpets, and the twanging of innumerable stringed instruments came to them through the open doors of the great building as they approached; but the Legioner was not permitted to pause outside to listen nor to examine the great, carved figures which guarded either side of the entrance, each of them bearing a certain grotesque resemblance to the face and figure of the professor. He was carried in bodily by the hurrying crowd, and raising his eyes to a high platform in the center he saw the erstwhile Professor Jacob Schmidt, now so transformed that he could hardly believe his eyes.

A gorgeous crimson robe heavily embroidered with gold thread had replaced the travel-worn khaki of the journey; each of the prominent knobs of his bald cranium had been carefully gilded, and shading his flashless eyes was a wreath of flowers which the professor vainly tried to keep in a dignified position. Grouped about him was a band of beautiful maidens, each of them waving a fan of gorgeous feathers; and surrounding the platform was a band of musicians, each member striving to outdo the others in the amount of noise he could produce from his instrument, whether it was of brass or wood. In spite of his elevated position the professor did not look happy, and his lips moved in inaudible speech as he occasionally made impatient gestures to the attendant damsels to stop fanning him, or shook his clenched fists at the orchestra; but his protests seemed only to make the maidens fan more vigorously, and the musicians blow or thump the harder.

His cry of relief and welcome when he caught sight of Coatsworth was audible even above the din, however; and jumping from his throne he pushed the maidens aside unceremoniously; and gathering the skirts of his long robe

ungracefully under his arm he ran down the steps and hurried toward him.

"*Ach, lieber Gott in Himmel*, but I am glad once more to see you!" he exclaimed as the Legioner gazed in speechless amazement at his grotesque and troubled face. "Not one hour since I am the god Izaquatz have those *verdammte* musicians *gespielt* not, and never do any two on the same key strike. My bald head is frozen from der *Feder-spiel* of those *Frauenzimmers*; and today they marry me to more as a hundred wives!"

"Cheer up, professor; they're not such bad-lookers," answered Coatsworth consolingly; for he had taken opportunity to survey the maidens on the platform; but again the professor's howl of protest was audible above the orchestra.

"Not maidens like those!" he protested. "It is wives I am to marry. The great nobles of Anhuac make sacrifice to the god Izaquatz; each a sacrifice of one of his wives, and *he* makes the choice. Do you not see—"

"Yes, you bet I do," answered the Legioner sympathetically. "I reckon you're up against the real thing, professor; but there's safety in—" He was interrupted by a rush of the maidens from the platform, who surrounded them both, and crowded them toward the throne which the professor had deserted so unceremoniously. The *pabas*, who had listened with lowering brow, managed to get himself included in the bunch, and he listened eagerly to the professor's voluble protests. There was a wicked gleam in his eye which the Legioner caught, and he held a finger of warning to the professor.

"This *gazabo* is wise to our lingo," he explained. "If you've been giving them a con about your—"

"Con?" exploded the professor. "Do you not know that it was to escape from one wife that I have in Azaguaykil lived?"

"I thought it was to put the kibosh on Von Pumpnickel," the American replied; but the professor's answer was drowned by the musicians. Even the Legioner found their discords trying;

and his late residence seemed less disagreeable by contrast; but just as he was wondering what the effect would be if he shot the leader, an arm was slipped about his waist and even above the din he distinguished the soft "Sharley darling!" which was whispered in his ear.

TO BE CONTINUED.



A SERMON THAT GRIPPED

DO sermons grip?" is now the question. It depends upon the preacher. Those of a certain parson of the wilds, of whom Bishop Potter tells, certainly grip. His vocation lies among the mining-camps, where he will take a room over the local grog-shop, "round up the boys," and talk them into tears and penitence.

After one of his sermons he ran his eye over his rough congregation, and, picking out the greatest desperado of the lot, announced, "Billy the Kid will now take the collection." The gambler called upon sprang to his feet, seized his hat as offertory-plate, and began his round.

The first man he approached offered a twenty-five-cent piece. Quick as lightning out came Billy's revolver. "Young man," he said, quite politely, as he pointed the weapon at him, "take that back. This is a dollar show." And with hat in one hand and six-shooter in the other, he put the finishing touch to the virile sermon they had heard. He got as many dollars as there were people present.



DARING DODGES OF CLEVER THIEVES

THAT the successful burglar is born, not made, may be judged from the report of a case which recently came before the Berlin courts. The assistants at a large hairdresser's shop, on arriving early one morning, found a placard on the shutters bearing the inscription, "Closed on account of sudden death." Thinking that the proprietor, Herr Jaskowiak, had died in the night, the assistants returned home, but later in the day some of them went back to the shop. They then found, to their astonishment, their master seated at his desk making a list of goods stolen from his shop. Knowing that the assistants arrived early, the burglars, three in number, put up the placard in order that they might not be disturbed.

Somewhat similar, though even more daring, was the ruse of a clever gang of international thieves which, a few years ago, robbed a firm of London goldsmiths of goods worth sixty thousand dollars. Aware that a watchman was not kept on the premises, and that the principal and employees of the firm lived in outlying suburbs, the burglars waited until nine o'clock on an evening which was both wet and dark. The shop had then been closed about an hour, and the thieves, carefully made up to resemble the men whose premises they were about to ransack, deliberately turned on a flood of light and affixed notices to the windows: "Great stock-taking sale! Twenty per cent. off all marked prices. Goods sacrificed to make room for new season's stock!"

Policemen on the beat, thinking they saw the proprietor and his assistants apparently hard at work checking their goods, suspected nothing, and the burglars safely escaped with their booty to the Continent.

The Kinship of Ages

By James Barr

Human nature is essentially the same in all ages—with interesting variations. This unusual story tells of a meal that was prepared by one man and eaten by his descendant several hundred years later



In fierce desperation Strong-o'-th'-Arm hurled his flint-tipped spears, one after the other, at the frenzied mammoth. A grim fear possessed him that he had been too hasty in his attack, and that his impatience threatened to rob him of his prey. The fear was maddening.

To the south in a cave were Strong-o'-th'-Arm's children, starving and whining, while his wife, half daft from want, roamed the neighboring wilds in lean hope of securing some small thing for food. Strong-o'-th'-Arm's own body and limbs were emaciated from famine; his eyes started from his head from strain of hunger. Too long a time he had clung to this especial hunting-ground which the tilting world was changing from a fruitful to a sterile plain. Now, even at the cost of life, he must secure this mighty fortune in food for his starving dependents. The fear of losing it inflamed his brain, and strung his every thew to highest tension.

When, after following its tracks weary leagues, he at length had come up with the mammoth he rejoiced to find it deeply mired in a morass. Seemingly the mighty animal had said "Kismet!" and made up its mind to die un-rebelliously, for it stood swinging its curled tusks slowly from side to side. Its eyes, bereft of their wild flame, were filmed, as those of one who beholds the oncoming stroke of fate and

accepts the inevitable with stoical resignation.

Even the arrival of its deadliest of enemies, man, in the person of Strong-o'-th'-Arm, did not rouse it from its apathy, for the brute stood spent from long struggle and bereft of hope. With not so much as one glance at the hunter it continued that swinging of its head, and little by little sank deeper into the mire over which frost was spreading an ever-thickening crust.

If Strong-o'-th'-Arm had but sat him down with his back to the north wind and his knees gathered up to his chin, and there waited in patient silence, nothing could have prevented him from securing food to last him all the long winter. But the pangs of hunger multiplied at the very sight of the mammoth, and the cry of his children rang clear in his ears. Wait he could not. With the fury of hope, a fury greater far than that of despair, he attacked the mammoth, trusting then and there to finish what nature had begun. Too late he discovered his mistake.

At the pang of the first-flung spear the mammoth awakened to violent activity. Willing it might have been to die a pacific death, but its whole nature rebelled against bearing the spasms of a poignant one; and, flying from one extreme to the other, it hurled itself into a fever of effort as impressive as the flurry of a lanced whale, so that Strong-o'-th'-Arm soon beheld it thrusting its huge bulk forward to where, but a short distance ahead, lay firm ground. One flung spear, the hunter felt con-

vinced, had cut a wound that must result in death; yet, perhaps, not immediate death, and should the mammoth succeed in heaving itself from the mire, Strong-o'-th'-Arm knew it would lunge away with its distance-covering stride, away so far that, weak and famished, he could not hope to follow.

A last spear remained in his possession; each of the others hung dripping from the side of the shaggy monster. With this lone spear he must accomplish the heroic. To risk all in one desperate hurl would be madness; for, should that fail to reach the seat of life, he would be left unarmed and helpless. But if he managed to blind the monster, then, even supposing it unmired itself, it could only trail out the remaining hours of its life swinging round in a fatuous circle while he, the hub of that circle, sat awaiting its fall. Taking his life in his hands Strong-o'-th'-Arm began his advance toward the beast's head.

The mammoth recognized the crisis. It ceased to struggle, its eyes flamed with hate and fear, and its gigantic frame quivered with the intensity of the moment, while its elongated upper lip seasawed up and down in nervous preparation. Strong-o'-th'-Arm held his spear by the extremity of the haft and approached with the stealthy caution of a stalking panther. A second's pause, then Strong-o'-th'-Arm darted forward, thrusting.

Simultaneous with the hunter's leap the mammoth swept its tusks in a side-wise slash, cutting the air viciously, like the swish of a saber. Yet tusk and spear each failed in its endeavor; for, in spite of the determination of his will, the man's body-instinct of self-preservation held him back from leaping close enough to deliver the blow. Quickly falling back a step the hunter, numbly annoyed with himself, stood panting while the mammoth redoubled its struggles for freedom. At length, detecting a fair opening, Strong-o'-th'-Arm again sprang.

This time the spear struck home, a full, sure stroke which instantly accomplished one-half the hunter's ambition,

but in making certain of landing his blow he failed to escape the sweep of the tusk, and Strong-o'-th'-Arm found himself hurtling through the air to bump along the frozen ground. Fortunately—perhaps it should be written unfortunately—for Strong-o'-th'-Arm he received the tusk's blow when it was all but spent; and there, prone on his back, he was able to watch the mammoth, roused into a fury of action, heave itself from the slough and make hysterically off through the thick-falling snow.

A long time Strong-o'-th'-Arm lay thinking. The range of his thoughts was limited, and strayed not so much as a hair's-breadth from first principles. At the beginning self was uppermost in his mind, his weakness, his hurts, his hunger; but presently came remembrance of his children and his wife. He believed death near, death whether he succeeded or failed in finding the brute again; yet could he but guide his children to a slain mammoth he might die assured of having left them an inheritance that would see them through the long winter now close at hand.

He must save his line! He must save his line, that the blood of Strong-o'-th'-Arm, once mighty hunter, might flow through veins to fire equally mighty hunters in days to come. All the savage's strong desire to carry on to future generations surged through his brain. With a sudden fierce wrench he flung himself to hands and knees.

By aid of his spear he painfully got upon his feet and stood there trembling like a wind-struck osier. Eagerly he peered into the snow-storm, hoping to discover a shadow on the ground telling of a mammoth brought to earth by its wounds, but no such sight met his gaze. His chin, since childhood carried with such masterful firmness, now hung loose, his lean chest heaved at every breath, and his ribs, from which the leather wrap had fallen, stood out till one might think they were Death's talons grasped about his middle.

At length he drew one hand across his eyes to brush away a dimness; then,

his spear trailed behind him, he staggered off on the broad trail of the monster. He neither hoped nor despaired, he was past all that; but instinct urged him to blunder on, dragging feet along the path scored by the mammoth's dragged feet.

Fifty yards, and Strong-o'-th'-Arm stumbled, recovering himself automatically, like one half asleep; a hundred yards, and the hunter was on his hands and knees; twenty yards farther and he pitched forward, and with a great sigh heaved over on his back. And there he lay, arms flung wide, eyes open to the sky, and hand still grasping the last spear. And thus died Strong-o'-th'-Arm, paleolithic man; died as many millions of his kind have died since his dim day, fearing not at all to say goodbye to life, but concerned only that he left behind him unprovided ones; and that, as a consequence, his line must perish from the face of the earth. If he could but have secured that fortune in food which his impetuosity caused him to miss, he would have met death unregrettingly.

Off in the snow-storm, not two hundred yards from where Strong-o'-th'-Arm lay, the stricken mammoth a second time blundered into a morass, and once more accepting the inevitable with the stoicism of a fatalist, awaited the death which came at last. And the gentle snow fell, covering hunter and hunted, and tens of thousands of leagues of country under the same white coverlet. Never had emperor more splendid winding-sheet than that of the mighty hunter, Strong-o'-th'-Arm, and his mighty prey, the mammoth.

While Strong-o'-th'-Arm still fought the mammoth, his wife, dumbly blessing the storm in that it veiled her stalking, managed to creep up to within striking distance of wild fowl and slew three. Seizing them by the neck—in that way they slid with the lay of their feathers—and trailing them behind her, she staggered to the cave, and with the half-broiled flesh brought life back to her children. Three days she sat awaiting the return of her lord, waiting

not in anxiety or fear, but with a numb sort of longing; then, gathering her children round her, she set face to the south, hoping to reach the nearest outpost of her husband's tribe.

A wonderful retreat the woman made of it, with the battalions of winter shrieking their fury over and round her, and throwing up entrenchments of drifts in her path, and volleying hail at her, and blotting out landmarks, and denuding the country of forage. In the face of all, patiently, indomitably, she held a true course; dispassionately she marshaled her little force and led them on, now breaking a broad path through the drifts for little legs to follow, now pausing to feed the babe at her breast, now lending a hand to a weary, straggling one. As necessity arose she halted her brood in the shelter of a rock, or drift, or bush; and there, leaving them curled up like so many cubs, she departed in search of food, and when success crowned her hunting, with nice justice she proportioned the food; she herself, though last fed, fed well, for the love she bore her babe was greater than great, it was fierce and burning.

Long nights she crouched, vigilantly watching. Every moment of the short day she pressed on, silent as the snow-clad plain about her, and in the end brought her brood to the cave of one of their tribe where, without exhibition of either welcome or hostility, she was permitted to take a corner. Had such an emotion been developed in man, Strong-o'-th'-Arm would have been proud of his mate for that retreat; yet, once the retreat was ended, remembrance of it passed from the woman's mind, for her slow-working brain was very practical, and busied itself only with thoughts for the present and the future.

The years passed, Strong-o'-th'-Arm's children grew to maturity, and one of them became the most powerful chief in all the land. Years multiplied to centuries and centuries to ages, while embalmed in ice as though dead but yesterday lay Strong-o'-th'-Arm and the mammoth he had killed too late to

serve. Man, ages ago, had migrated from the sterile region, while the very race of the mammoth passed away forever. Far to the south man overran the earth, increasing in possessions until, from many generations of life in fruitful climes, some of the bolder spirits inheriting nomad blood grew dissatisfied with ease, and pushed off into the rugged parts of the earth, inviting adventures and danger. Famous among these was Jarl Armstrong, of Viking Hall, Yorkshire.

Armstrong, a bachelor and last of an old Yorkshire family, had won fame as a shooter of big game before starting on his arctic expedition, than which no such disastrous one had sailed since the day of Sir John Franklin. At his own cost Armstrong fitted out the ship *Viking*; and, entering the Arctic Ocean by way of Bering Strait, he was soon in difficulties. All the first winter he was frozen in, and when spring came the ice crushed the *Viking* against New Siberia Island as remorselessly as a bear might crush a mouse.

Before Jarl Armstrong reached the Siberian mainland disease had cut up his company. In the sterile Lena delta his remaining followers dropped one by one, although the leader urged, cursed, coaxed, laughed, drove, ever alert, ever masterful, ever resourceful; and at length, in spite of all his exertions, Jarl Armstrong found himself the sole survivor, except five huskie dogs and their leader, a Siberian hound. As time passed one dog after the other fell a sacrifice to the needs of the rest, until there remained the hound alone, the hound which had proved itself a leader among dogs as its master was among men. And at the dawn of one day, under shelter of the Lena bank, Jarl Armstrong shared with the hound the last remnant of the last other dog.

Preparing a bivouac that evening Jarl Armstrong on a sudden missed the great hound. Up to this hour the two had been inseparable, drawn together by like responsibilities and capabilities, so that of late they had shared food and shelter and bivouac. Jarl Armstrong trusted the hound as he might a

brother, and the hound showed equal sense of security and faith in its master. Consequently, when the explorer glanced about him and failed to find the dog at heel a feeling of great loneliness fell upon his soul. Alarmed, he stepped out upon the ice from under the overhanging bank. The next instant a snarl caused him to glance up quickly.

There on top of the bank, its form rigid, the hair of its neck in a stiff ruff, its fangs bared toward him and its eyes like two burning coals stood the hound, savage and defiant. Never had Jarl Armstrong beheld such a personification of wedded hate and fear as now confronted him in the shape of his former companion. Quicker than Armstrong himself, the hound had reduced matters to essence; it was now to be a fight for survival between them. There could be no longer friendship—that the hound had been the first to recognize. One must go under to the other. One must eat the other. The instant that Jarl Armstrong recognized that the dog recognized, he sprang for his gun. Then, like a thunderbolt, the hound was upon him.

Headlong Jarl Armstrong was flung crashing upon the ice, and next instant man and hound battled for life, each fighting for possession of the other's throat. Thought of the dog attacking him had not crossed the explorer's mind; and for some minutes the dizziness of consternation, added to the crash of the fall, impeded his struggles as over and over on the ice rolled the two, silent save for heavy, panting breaths. At each attempt of the man's to gain a foothold the hound volleyed him flat again, well knowing that its great chance lay in keeping its foe prostrate; and to this endeavor the slippery ice lent effective aid. Had he been the Jarl Armstrong of the days before those weeks of famine, short shrift would have been given the maddened animal, but he was worn; and, too, in some strange way this change in the hound from friend to fiend mortified him so that his fight lacked the true Armstrong fire.

But at length, clothes in ribbons and

flesh ripped, the grim reality of the struggle sent his fighting-blood to the boil; then, with a shout of rage, Jarl Armstrong leaped to his feet, bringing with him the hound, whose fangs were skewered in the man's right cheek. Tight as the clamp of steel bands Jarl Armstrong fastened his hands round the hound's throat to choke the jaws from their hold, and there the two stood—for the hound's hind paws but touched the ice—there the two stood in silence, the red eyes of the man glaring into the glare of the hound's red eyes.

No long time passed before the hound was in difficulties. Without loosening its grip on Armstrong's cheek it strove to shake free its throat, but failing in this, it heaved its hind paws against the man's chest, throwing its whole weight on his arms. This maneuver came within an ace of bringing Jarl Armstrong to his knees, but strength of mind rather than of body nerved him to stand erect, and retaining his hold he squeezed all the tighter.

At length his determination met with its reward. Will overmastered ferocity, reason conquered instinct, and the hound's fangs came out of the man's cheek to the sound of an all-but-stifled gasp. Then Jarl Armstrong in his madness did an insane thing. Instead of retaining his hold on the hound's throat and crushing the last spark of life out of the animal, he with his right hand seized it by one fore paw. Three times round his head, a circle of hair and claws and fangs, he swung the gasping hound, then as an athlete throws the hammer, he hurled it with such fierce might that it struck the ice a hundred feet away. Pausing one moment to see it slither across the smooth surface of the river, Jarl Armstrong dashed for his gun and fired both barrels at the hound, now running its fastest for the shelter of a point of land. The brute offered a fair target, certainly, for that barrel which was charged with buckshot; but the explorer's nerves were shaken and he failed to knock over the flying hound.

That night Jarl Armstrong spent in watchful misery. Hitherto the gaunt

depression of loneliness had not been with him to accentuate his sufferings, but now there was neither man nor beast to share his long watch. Indeed, when he turned the matter over in his mind, he felt a grim joy in that, having no friend, there lived and moved near him a relentless enemy. That was better than utter isolation. At intervals during the night the stillness was broken by a long-drawn-out howl, sometimes far off, sometimes near; a howl of dismal savagery, of hunger, of pain, and—yes, of loneliness too, and regret. Yet in it rang nothing of hope. Instinct told the hound that no hope remained, and each howl passed the news on to the encircling wilds. In the morning when Jarl Armstrong set his face to the south there, just out of shot, was the hound, keeping menacing line with him.

Before that day's end Jarl Armstrong, red rage in his heart, hunger gnawing at his inside, found himself ruthlessly stalking the hound. Crouching he ran over the frozen ground, he crept behind bushes, knelt beside boulders, hoping to take the dog unawares. At evening, more spent than he knew, on the chance of a shot he hid in a bunch of coarse grasses, and there such a drowsiness crept over him that, in spite of all he could do, it shackled his limbs and closed his eyes.

He had a fierce awakening. Again the hound was upon him with double fury, mauling him as it might have a fox. This time, however, no ice made footing insecure, and like a flash he was upon his feet while the hound, recognizing a lost chance, bounded out of shot before the dazed man recovered his wits.

"Thank God for that attack!" exclaimed Jarl Armstrong, more of savagery than of piety in his tones. "Cold and strain are overpowering me. If sleep had been allowed me it must have yawned into a last long sleep. That dog saved my life, now for the dog's life! I shall pursue the hound till I drop in my tracks; then 'good-by' to Jarl, last of the Armstrongs."

—Angered to fresh effort the explorer

pushed on and peered over a slight rise, behind which the hound had disappeared. A limitless, wind-swept plain lay before him, a plain flooded with light from a full moon that swung in an icy sky.

"How familiar this infinity of loneliness seems to me!" he muttered, gazing at the scene. "It has the looks of a country once seen in a dream."

Presently Jarl Armstrong's eyes opened wide; for there, not fifty yards from where he stood, crouched the hound, tearing at the hard ground. The brute had found something and was digging for it, and surely that something could be nothing else than food. Hunger! Hunger was the one pang that filled the world; food was the everything in life. The hound must have found food. Without wasting an instant in speculation, Jarl Armstrong dashed down the slope at the same instant as the hound, with a snarl of disappointment, made off. Armstrong had thought that the dog would stay, because, if food were found, enmity between them would cease. In this he gave the hound less than due credit. The hound realized the real position.

On reaching the spot where the hound had dug Jarl Armstrong found ice, hard-frozen, clear of face. He peered against its surface, then started back.

"My God! Are my features so death-like?" he cried. "Has suffering so scarred, so chiseled me? It must be that the moon distorts!"

Quickly he took a few paces; then, the moon at his back, returned. This time the shock he got was of double violence. The reflection in the ice lay athwart his thrown shadow. At length he knew the reflection to be indeed a dead man.

Long time in deep silence Jarl Armstrong stood there, studying the face beneath the glass ice, staring into eyes that stared back into his. Time and time again he vigorously rubbed his forehead, then stared and stared. At length he began to speak as if to the corpse.

"Folk tell that one returns to earth

each ten thousand years. Well, silent one, silent self, here am I once more: Here I stand in the flesh, gazing at you, my dead self. You were I, and I, Jarl Armstrong, am you. You have my features, my father had your features. Before gods and men you lie there manifestly hall-marked an Armstrong."

Only in delirium can the infinite be fathomed. Peering into the face of Strong-o'-th'-Arm Jarl Armstrong stood spellbound, neither able nor wishing to move, feeling nothing, remembering nothing, willing nothing, while the kinship of ages wove its fascination around him. Again it was the hound that awakened him from catalepsy. The sound of loud barking smote upon his ears. A lightning glance showed him that again the hound had fallen to digging.

"What!" he cried in swift anger. "What! Another? Am I to run a line of my own corpses? Have I always come here to die? Is my ten-thousandth-year self dotted across this accursed plain? And when I reach my last-buried self am I to die, and complete the ellipsis until another ten thousand years pass, when I hurry back here to die again? Has that damned hound unearthed another of me? It would seem even so, and if so then let me look upon my still another corpse."

As Jarl Armstrong finished speaking the hound looked up, but instead of bolting, it stabbed its nose into the air and barked a welcome, wagging its tail vigorously. Jarl Armstrong was not to be befooled. He crept within certain shot, then clapped his gun to shoulder. His finger sought the trigger, his eye glinted along the barrels which covered the hound. But this time the hound, instead of bolting, came forward to meet its master, still barking and wagging tail. Common sense cried to Jarl Armstrong to shoot, but something stronger than common sense commanded "Halt!" He lowered his gun.

When the two met, the hound pushed forth its nose and licked the hand it a few hours before had torn. Armstrong, disdaining to forgive, strode on. Half a hundred steps brought them to

where a fall of earth into the Lena had laid bare a great block of prehistoric ice. Out of this protruded the curl of a mammoth's tusk, and peering into this Jarl Armstrong was just able to make out a deeper shadow in the shadowy depth. Dimly his eye limned the outlines of a mammoth. Turning he took the hound's head between his trembling palms and looked into the brute's eyes.

"Hound"—his voice faltered, for at that moment he felt as a man broken. "Hound, think of it! Hound, what an escape you and I have had! Hound, if one of us had succeeded in murdering the other!"

The hound wagged its tail; it whined sympathetically; it blinked its eyes; it reached out and licked Jarl Armstrong's lacerated face. The hound knew.

That night man and hound fed full on mammoth steak, fresh as if killed but yesterday; then, in old-time confidence, they curled up together and slept. Bread cast upon the waters had returned after many, many days.

When again the friends set their eyes

to the south they were harnessed together by thongs of mammoth hide to a sledge of mammoth hide loaded with mammoth steak sufficient to provender them to the nearest settlement. But before leaving Jarl Armstrong built one cairn, and registered two vows. The cairn would keep inviolate the body of Strong-o'-th'-Arm until Jarl Armstrong should return with spade and pick and bury the body deep, that it might defeat decay for still immeasurable time. Thus would be fulfilled the first vow. The second vow was that no word of his find of paleolithic man should pass his lips; for as soon would Jarl Armstrong have torn his own father from the tomb as to have placed this body under the gaze of the curious—the body of the hunter who not only had slain the mammoth, as the flint-headed spears bore witness, but also had guided the hound to the life-giving find.

And what Jarl Armstrong vowed, that Jarl Armstrong fulfilled. And Strong-o'-th'-Arm slept on. And the line of the Armstrongs continued.



MOST DURABLE WOOD

WHAT kind of wood is the most durable? To answer this question some interesting experiments have been made, and the following results obtained. Birch and poplar decayed in three years, willow and horse-chestnut in four years, maple and beech in five years, elm and ash in seven years; oak and Scottish fir decayed to the depth of half an inch in seven years; and juniper was uninjured at the expiration of the seven years.



THE SCHEMER UNDONE

JONES—JONES! I call for Mr. Jones! I want to hear what he has to say!" It was the tenth time that the political-meeting had been disturbed by this imperative demand.

At last, after many further repetitions of the same strident request, a young man mounted the platform and spoke.

Once more came from the same part of the hall the yell for "Jones—Jones!"

"My good man," exclaimed the chairman, "what ails you? Mr. Jones is now speaking!"

"Is that Mr. Jones?" cried the interrupter. "Why, it can't be! That's the chap who paid me half a crown to keep on calling for Jones!"

Does any one know why the young man left the platform and vanished in the darkness?

The Yellow Face

By Fred M. White

Author of "The Crimson Blind," "The White Battalions," Etc.

CHAPTER XLI.

A PIECE OF MUSIC.



IN other circumstances, Anstruther would have been pleased with the turn of events. He knew now that Smith, whom for so long he had been persecuting, was the rich Lord Barmouth. This, too, saved a deal of trouble; for instance, Serena need not have been brought here at all. Now Anstruther would be able to blackmail Barmouth for thousands, whereas he had been content with hundreds from the more humble Smith. Barmouth smiled, as he followed Anstruther's train of thought. He was reading the other's mind like an open book.

"I know exactly what you are thinking about," he said. "You are not sighing for lost opportunities; you are going to make it all up in the future. Still, I have puzzled you; and, perhaps, frightened you a little. You are perfectly well aware why I have concealed my identity for so long. And you would give a great deal to know why I have so suddenly come out and met you in the open. On that point I have no intention of gratifying your curiosity. You may put your mask on again, and I will resume mine; but of one thing you may be certain. Either as Lord Barmouth or as James Smith, not one farthing more will you ever receive from me."

Barmouth turned contemptuously away, and unlocked the door.

"Now you can go your way, and I will go mine," he said. "I shall say nothing of this to Lady Barmouth; at least, not for the present. Make the best of your evening's pleasure. It will be the last time you will ever be under my roof."

With an irritated feeling of defeat Anstruther stalked from the room, followed by Lord Barmouth, who lost no chance of hunting up Jack and Rigby. He told his interested listeners what had happened.

"I think you have acted wisely, Lord Barmouth," Rigby said. "We are so hot upon the track of Anstruther now that a day or two makes little difference. At the same time, I cannot quite see why Anstruther should have come here in this mysterious way, when he might have accompanied Claire quite openly."

Jack was inspired with a sudden idea. "It's all a question of alibi," he said. "We know perfectly well what an ingenious scheme Anstruther has put up so that he may be what an Irishman would call in two places at the same time. Here is a magnificent opportunity of getting to the bottom of that mysterious music business."

"Right you are," Rigby cried. "It would be like flying in the face of Providence to throw away such a chance. Anstruther is here, and likely to remain, and so is Serena. You may depend upon it that the other maid has gone to bed, so that we should have the house in Panton Square all to ourselves. You know the ropes better than I do, Jack. Can you tell us a good way

of getting into the house without playing the burglar?"

Jack thought a moment, then an inspiration came to him again; the thing was quite simple.

"We can walk into the place as if it belonged to us," he said. "When Claire came away, Anstruther told her that he should retire early. Claire did not wish to keep the servants up unduly, so she took a latch-key with her."

"Absolutely made for us," Rigby exclaimed. "You go off to Miss Helmsley and borrow her latch-key, and we will get to the bottom of the whole mystery while Anstruther is enjoying himself here."

Jack came back presently with the latch-key in his possession. It was an easy matter to get out of the house without being observed. Then a cab was called, and the two proceeded to Jack's chambers, where they stripped off their fancy dresses hastily and assumed more civilized attire.

"I vote we take Bates into this business," Rigby suggested. "I've got a little idea of my own, which I will tell you about after we have been to Panton Square."

Unfortunately the services of Inspector Bates were not available, for he had been called out on some business of importance, and was not expected back till the following morning.

"We shall have to go through it ourselves," Jack said. "You will have a fine lot of copy for the *Planet* a bit later on. I declare, I am getting quite fascinated by my present occupation. Shall we take a cab, or would it not be more safe for us to walk?"

Panton Square was reached at length, and Number Five appeared to be in total darkness. As the friends had anticipated, Serena's fellow servant had gone to bed, for neither at the front or back of the house was there so much as a glimmer of light to be seen. An application of the latch-key to the door proved quite successful, and a minute later the two friends were inside. They had not the slightest hesitation in putting up the lights, so that the passing police might infer that the occupants of

the place had returned. Not that he wanted to trouble much about anything but the study, seeing that it was thence that the mysterious music always emanated.

It was an ordinary-looking room enough, the walls being entirely lined with books. There were books everywhere, not an inch of space being available for more. The ceiling was quite plain, and the closest search failed to disclose anything in the way of an apparatus by which the sounds of music could be conveyed from a distance into the study. Jack looked round with a puzzled frown.

"All the same, it must come that way," he said. "I know perfectly well that one of Padini's recitals came into this room as if it had been carried by some electrical means."

"A sort of telephone, I suppose," Rigby said. "Of course, we have all heard of the theater-phone, but that theory would not work out in this case. With the dodge in question you have to plug both ears with a kind of receiver, and even then the music is only audible to those using the little receivers. In the present instance I understand that the whole room is flooded with melody, just as if the player were actually here."

"You've got it exactly," Jack explained. "I have heard it myself, and so has Claire; and both of us spotted the music as being in precisely the style of Padini. Hang me if I can see the slightest sign of how the thing is worked."

Rigby said nothing; indeed, he was hardly listening. He was pacing around the room pulling armfuls of books out here and there, as if expecting to find some cunning device hidden behind the volumes. He stooped to pick up Anstruther's violin-case, which lay upon the floor. The case had been recently dropped, or some weight had fallen upon it, for the lid was cracked all across, and the hinges were broken. Rigby gave a little cry as he threw back the lid.

"Here's a discovery for you," he exclaimed. "Anstruther's violin with the neck broken off. If you will look at it

closely, you will see that it is covered with dust, and evidently has not been used for days. Of course, it is just possible that Anstruther possesses two violins——"

"I know, as a matter of fact, that he doesn't," Jack said. "This is his Cremona right enough. I have had it in my hands a hundred times."

"We are getting on!" Rigby laughed. "This room has been flooded with melody night after night, and yet we know for a fact that Anstruther's violin has been absolutely useless."

"That does not help us to a solution of the problem," Jack said. "But I have an idea. We shall never get to the truth through Anstruther, but Padini may help us. Now it is very improbable that Anstruther will be back within an hour. I'll stay here while you go off to the Great Metropolitan Hotel and see Padini. If you flatter him a bit, he will probably play for you. He will certainly do this in his own room, because professionals of mark never practise in public. What I am driving at is this: I feel quite certain that whatever Padini plays to you, I shall hear in this room."

"Excellent!" Rigby cried. "I will go at once."

Late as it was, Padini had not gone to bed; indeed, one of the servants informed Rigby that the violinist had been practising on his violin for the past hour. Without the slightest hesitation, Rigby made his way into Padini's room. The latter looked up with an air of surprise; evidently he had been taking a little more champagne than was good for him.

"I seem to know your face," he said.

"Of course you do," Rigby said smoothly. "Don't you remember me interviewing you for the *Planet*? I happened to be in the hotel, and I thought I would look you up. I suppose it would be too much to ask you to play something to me? I am passionately fond of music, to say nothing of being a great admirer of yours. Besides, I have a particular desire to hear you to-night."

Padini looked up with just a shade of

suspicion in his eyes. Rigby felt that perhaps he was going a bit too far. He proceeded to flatter the artist to such an extent that Padini's suspicions were quickly lulled to rest. There was a half-empty bottle of champagne on the table, but Rigby refused the proffered hospitality.

"No, thank you," he said. "I came to hear you play. I know it was a great liberty on my part; and, if you like, you can turn me out at once; but I wish you would play something."

Padini rose rather unsteadily, and reached for his violin. Once his fingers grasped the neck of his instrument, he seemed to be himself again. Rascal as the fellow was, there was no doubt of his great artistic qualities. He handled his bow with the air and grip of a master. He started some slow movement from one of Beethoven's sonatas, and Rigby lay back in his chair, giving himself up entirely to the delight of the moment.

It seemed, if Padini once started, he would not know when to stop, for he played one piece after another, entirely forgetting that he had an audience. Across Rigby's brain there came floating the germ of a great idea. Padini finished a brilliant passage, and the bow fell from his hands.

"There, my friend," he said breathlessly. "Never have I played better than I have done to-night."

"You are indeed a master," Rigby said, and he meant every word that he uttered. "An artist so great as yourself should be a composer also. Have you published anything at all?"

The flattered artist replied that he had not published anything so far, but there were one or two little things which he had written in his spare time, and these he intended offering to some publisher who was prepared to pay a price for them.

"Would you mind playing me one?" Rigby asked. "I should prefer a piece that nobody has ever heard."

Padini swept his bow across the strings, and proceeded to play a perfect little gem in a minor key. To a certain

extent it reminded Rigby of Gounod's "Ave Maria," though its originality and breadth deprived it of any suggestion of plagiarism.

"Perfect in its way," Rigby said. "Would you mind giving me the score? If you will, I can get a good price for it from the *Planet* people. We are going to publish music at reasonable rates, and there is no reason why you should not have fifty guineas for it."

Padini declared that he quite shared Rigby's opinion. He took a sheet of manuscript music from a drawer, and threw it carelessly across to his companion.

"There you are," he said. "Make the best bargain you can for me. What? You are not going already?"

Rigby muttered something to the effect that he had not yet finished his work at the office, and that he must tear himself away, much as he would like to have stayed to hear more of that beautiful music. A few minutes later Rigby left the room. As he glanced back he saw that Padini had fallen into his armchair again, and was already half asleep. Rigby smiled to himself, wondering what Padini would say if he knew the purpose to which the sheet of manuscript music would be devoted.

He called a cab and hastened away in the direction of Panton Square, where he expected that Jack would be still awaiting him. The lights were up at Number Five just as they were when Rigby had started for the Great Metropolitan Hotel; but, all the same, he took the precaution of whistling softly, in case anything had gone wrong. The front door opened cautiously, and Jack's head peeped out. A moment later, and Rigby was inside.

"Well?" he demanded impatiently. "Anything happened?"

"A great deal," Jack replied. "For half an hour everything was quiet, then that wonderful music started. Mind you, I haven't the remotest idea where it came from; I am just as much in the fog as ever. But it filled the room as if some great artist was invisible to me. I could recognize Padini's touch. Of course, I am assuming that you found

him at home, and persuaded him to play to you. Can I take that for granted?"

"It is exactly as you say," Rigby explained. "Please go on."

"Then I will tell you what Padini played. He started with the first part of 'The Moonlight Sonata.'"

Rigby nodded and smiled. His smile broadened as Jack proceeded to tick off the pieces of music just as they had been played.

"There was one, however, that I could not follow," he said. "It was that lovely little thing at the end. I am absolutely certain that it was an original piece of music."

Rigby laughed as he produced the scrap of manuscript from his pocket. There was an expression of triumph on his face.

"Original, and in my possession," he cried. "This scrap of paper contains the key to the whole situation."

CHAPTER XLII.

THE TRAP IS BAITED.

Jack looked inquiringly at his friend. He had not yet fully grasped the significance of Rigby's remark. He asked for an explanation. Rigby went on to speak rapidly.

"It's like this, you see," he remarked. "When I saw that fellow just now and got him to play to me, a rather good idea came into my mind. So long as Anstruther can manage to delude us into believing that he spends most of his evenings in playing classical music, we can't get much further. Classical music is open to everybody; and if we allege that on a certain evening Anstruther performed one of Beethoven's sonatas—or, rather, that Padini performed it—we should have great difficulty in proving our point."

"I think I catch your idea," Jack said.

"I thought you would. My idea was to get something original; something, if possible, that Anstruther has never even heard. He couldn't very well play a piece he had never heard, now, could he? I asked Padini if he had anything

of the kind in hand, and he played the piece which you so much liked. As I said just now, I have the thing in my pocket; and by means of that simple sheet of paper we are going to trap Anstruther."

"I don't quite see how," Jack said.

"What I mean is that we are going to manage it between us. Unless I am greatly mistaken, events will move very rapidly to-morrow night. Anstruther must of necessity be out most of the time after dinner, but the music in the study will go on all the same. You must manage to dine in Panton Square to-morrow night, and I will work the thing from the Great Metropolitan Hotel with Padini.

"In the course of the evening Padini will play the melody which we are now talking about, and you will hear it. Now, I know Miss Helmsley is a very capable pianist, and I want her to follow the air carefully, so that she will be able to play it by ear. Then we shall be in a position to ask Anstruther the name of the piece that attracted her so much. Miss Helmsley can pick it out on the piano for him, and ask him to play it again. You can imagine his difficulty, but you can hardly imagine a way out of it. This is only a side issue, I know; but it will all tell when we bring Anstruther to book and expose the whole conspiracy."

Jack appreciated the point, and promised to do his best to bring the comedy to a successful issue. There was nothing for it now but to reassume their fancy dresses and return to Belgrave Square.

By this time a considerable number of the guests were moving on elsewhere, though the majority of those present meant to see the thing through. As the cab bearing Jack and Rigby drove up they saw the tall figure of Anstruther coming down the steps. He stood there as if hesitating for a moment, then called a passing cab and gave some directions to Piccadilly.

"Any money that I know where he is going to," Rigby said. "My dear fellow, you go inside and see Miss Helmsley, while I take this cab back to our

rooms and change again into civilized attire."

"What are you going to do now?" Jack asked.

"I am going to follow Anstruther," Rigby explained. "I feel so restless to-night that I can't settle down to anything. So I am just going to follow that fellow, who is most assuredly going to see Carrington."

It was half an hour later before Rigby found himself, minus his fancy dress, in Piccadilly opposite the rooms occupied by Carrington. It was very late now, and Piccadilly was absolutely deserted, save for a passing policeman and a stray night cab whose driver appeared to be asleep upon the box. Rigby hesitated for a moment, a little uncertain as to what to do.

There was no difficulty in ascertaining whether Carrington had or had not gone to bed, for the lights were up in his sitting-room, and presently a shadow appeared upon the blind. Doubtless this was Carrington, and all speculation was set at rest an instant later by a second shadow on one of the blinds. The gigantic head-dress of Anstruther loomed large against the light. There was nothing for it now but to wait patiently upon the course of events. Rigby pulled at the leg of the slumbering cabman, and brought him to a sense of his responsibilities.

"I don't want to take your cab anywhere," he explained. "All I want is to hire it for an hour or so and sit inside. You can go to sleep again if you like, and I'll wake you when I am ready to go. It will be an easy way of earning half a sovereign."

The cabman grinned and nodded as Rigby disappeared in the cab. It was perhaps an hour later before the door leading to Carrington's flat opened and Anstruther came out. Evidently he had left his fancy dress behind him, for he was attired in a rough coat and deer-stalker hat. Carrington appeared to be dissuading his friend from something, and Rigby could hear the latter laugh in reply.

"I tell you it must be done," Anstruther said, "and it will have to be

done to-morrow night. I shall see friend Charlie without delay. If he is not in, I shall leave a settled note for him."

Anstruther strode off down the street, and presently hailed another night cab which was crawling down the road. Rigby sat up and aroused his own driver.

"Here's another five shillings for you," he said. "Keep that cab in front of you in sight, and follow it till it stops. Then you shall have fifteen shillings. Unless I am greatly mistaken, you will not have very far to go."

As a matter of fact, Rigby had summed up the situation quite correctly. The mention of the name of Charlie had given him the clue he required, this same Charlie being none other than the professional cracksman who had been engaged by Anstruther to deliver the letter to Ferris at the Great Metropolitan Hotel. This deduction proved to be absolutely correct, for a little later the first cab pulled up in front of the tenement-house where Seymour had taken up his temporary quarters.

Rigby dismissed the cab, and followed cautiously. He was in time to see Anstruther take a key from his pocket, and let himself quietly into the rooms occupied by the individual who was known to his friends and admirers as Simple Charlie. Then Rigby turned and knocked for admission at the outer door of Seymour's apartments. The latter did not appear in the least surprised to see Rigby.

"I came here quite by chance," the latter explained. "I quite expected to be told that you had not returned home yet. Lady Barmouth's dance might have kept on till daylight."

"I had to come away," Seymour explained. "In fact, I lost sight of Anstruther, and it rather put me out. Can you tell me anything about him? But of course you can, or you would not be here."

Rigby explained at length what had taken place during the past hour. Seymour chuckled as he listened.

"Rather a good joke," he said. "Here is Anstruther looking for his friend

Simple Charlie, while all the time we have that desirable individual tight by the leg at the Great Metropolitan Hotel. I suppose you can pretty well guess what's going to happen? Anstruther was desperately frightened to-night by my allusion to that set of Cellini plate. He will know no peace of mind until that stuff is removed from Carrington's private safe. There will be another burglary, of a sort, and Simple Charlie has been selected to open the safe. You see, as the safe is not in the vaults, but in Carrington's private office, it would never do to use dynamite there."

"That is all very well," Rigby objected. "But how is Anstruther going to make use of Simple Charlie so long as the latter is in our hands? That seems to be rather an objection."

"Oh, I have thought all that out," Seymour laughed. "From what you told me just now, it is evident that Anstruther means to leave a note for his pal if the latter is away. In the event of Simple Charlie being professionally engaged elsewhere to-morrow night, he will be asked to find a substitute. As we are perfectly well aware of the fact that there is no chance of Anstruther finding his friend at home, it is only logical to assume that he will leave the note behind. In a few moments that note will be in our possession, and we shall be in a position to read it at leisure. Then I will take it the first thing in the morning to the Great Metropolitan Hotel, and force Simple Charlie to write a suitable reply. Do you follow me?"

"Oh, quite," Rigby said. "You are going to choose your own substitute. Have you fixed upon him yet?"

Seymour chuckled in reply, but declined to afford any information for the present. He suggested that Rigby should go outside and see if Anstruther had yet gone. Rigby came back presently with information to the effect that the burglar's outer door was locked, thus fairly assuming that Anstruther had executed his task and had gone. Seymour produced the simple apparatus by means of which he had entered the burglar's rooms on the last occasion.

"I am going to get that letter," he explained simply. "You need not have any fear about me. Open the window, please."

In less than five minutes Seymour was back again with the letter in his hand. He laid it on the table, and then proceeded to steam the envelope open with the aid of a kettle of hot water which he procured from the kitchen.

There was very little in the letter, but that little was to the point. The writer curtly commanded the recipient to meet him to-morrow night at a quarter to twelve outside the Mansion House station of the underground railway. The recipient was enjoined to come prepared for business—and the last three words were underlined. In the event of this being impossible, Simple Charlie was asked to procure a substitute, and let the writer of the letter know this not later than ten o'clock the next morning at the old address and in the old way. It was perfectly plain.

"You see exactly what this means," Seymour said. "I take it that the old address means Panton Square. But Simple Charlie will have to tell me all about that in the morning. He shall write to Anstruther and put everything in order first. I have prepared a very pretty little surprise for Anstruther."

Seymour chuckled again, but refused to gratify Rigby's curiosity. He was taking no risks, he said; he even went so far as to seal down the letter again and return it to the burglar's rooms.

"We cannot afford to make a single mistake," he said. "Any little slip might ruin the whole delicate business."

There was nothing further to do, at least so far as that night was concerned. It was getting very late now, and Rigby declined Seymour's offer of a whisky and soda and cigar. He turned as though to go, and held out his hand to Seymour. Then he paused, as a sudden thought struck him.

"There is one thing we have forgotten," he said. "Don't you think it would be as well to take Bates into our confidence? We had arranged to do so, but when we called an hour or two ago at Shannon Street police-station he was

not in. I don't know whether you agree with me or not, but I think he would be extremely useful to us just now."

Seymour nodded and chuckled. He seemed to be in the enjoyment of some good joke which he desired to keep to himself.

"Oh, we must have Bates in this, by all means. Perhaps you would not mind leaving a message as you go along, and ask him to be good enough to call here not later than nine to-morrow morning. I think I can promise Inspector Bates that his time with me will not be wasted. And now, if you must go——"

Rigby took the hint and departed. He left the message for Bates, who, he was informed, might not be at the office the whole of the next day. This being so, Rigby rose early, and made his way to Shannon Street police-station directly after breakfast. He was fortunate enough to catch Bates, who appeared to be in a tremendous hurry. He had five minutes to spare, he explained, but a quarter of an hour had elapsed before Bates rose and rang his bell.

"The other business must wait," he said. "Important as it is, I will go and call on Seymour at once."

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE SUBSTITUTE.

It was nearly eleven o'clock before Bates reached Seymour's rooms. He listened patiently to all that the latter had to say, and he chuckled grimly when Seymour's plot was laid before him.

"Upon my word, sir, you ought to have been on the force yourself," he exclaimed. "I never heard a neater scheme. I have been puzzling my brains the last day or two for some way of getting hold of Anstruther. I can get Carrington at any moment; in fact, I have a warrant for his arrest in my pocket now. You see, I can easily prove that he has been disposing of his clients' securities, but that hardly affects Anstruther. I suppose you want me to go round to the Great Metropolitan Hotel, and compel Simple Charlie to act

as bonnet for us. I have not the slightest doubt that he will be able to find a good substitute if he likes. But there is one little difficulty in the way which you have not thought of."

"Oh, yes, I have," Seymour replied. "I know perfectly well what you mean. You mean that even a burglar has some code of honor, and that he would hesitate to betray a pal into such a trap as this. But if the substitute that I have in mind is acceptable to you, there is no reason for further anxiety."

Seymour scribbled a name on a sheet of paper, and handed it across to Bates. The latter laughed as he read it.

"Oh, most assuredly you ought to have been on the force," he said. "The thing is so clever, and yet so delightfully simple."

Meanwhile, Masefield was carrying out his side of the program. He saw Rigby once or twice during the day, and the latter informed him that everything was going splendidly.

"I was at the Great Metropolitan Hotel this morning," he explained; "in fact, I was present at the interview between Bates and a man known as Simple Charlie. We had not the slightest difficulty in getting that rascal to do everything that we wish. He seemed ready to do anything to save his own skin. As I told you just now, the old address mentioned in Anstruther's letter was Panton Square. By ten o'clock this morning Anstruther had received a letter, in Simple Charlie's handwriting, saying that it was quite impossible for him to come himself, but that he would send an efficient substitute, who would meet Anstruther at the Mansion House station at the appointed time. All you have to do now is to invite yourself to dinner at Panton Square, and in the course of the evening you will be pretty sure to hear the music going on in the study as usual. Of course, Anstruther will not be there, but that will make no difference in the harmonic program. And mind you listen carefully for the original piece of music you heard last night."

"How are you going to manage that?" Jack asked.

"Well, you see, we have divided ourselves up into three companies," Rigby explained. "You are going to look after Panton Square, Bates and Seymour will engineer the campaign as far as the City and Provincial Bank is concerned, and I am going to have supper with Padini. He elected that the supper should take place in his own room at the hotel. You can guess why."

Jack began to see matters more clearly now. The task allotted to himself was plain and simple. He would have preferred something more in the way of adventure; but, after all, somebody must do the ordinary work. He managed to see Anstruther in the afternoon, and intimated to him that he was dining in Panton Square that night. Anstruther replied that he was glad to hear it.

It was nearly eight o'clock when Jack strolled into the drawing-room at Panton Square, and found Claire alone there. He deemed it prudent not to tell her too much of what had taken place the last few hours; indeed, he was more concerned to hear the latest information about Serena.

"I have not seen much of her to-day," Claire said. "I do not know what to make of her at all. Late last night she came into my bedroom, and we had a long talk about her boy. It is a very strange thing, Jack, that only this morning a man arrived to see my guardian—a man who seemed to be annoyed at Mr. Anstruther's refusal to pay him a sum of money. I happened to overhear a few words as they parted. The stranger declared that if he did not have something definite by Saturday, 'he would send the kid back.' I should have thought nothing of this if I had not heard Serena's story last night; but, taken in conjunction with what she said, I shouldn't wonder if the man in question had the custody of the poor woman's child."

"This is interesting," Jack said. "Did you take any particular note of the man's appearance?"

Claire replied that she had not failed to do so. But she had not followed him, though her suspicions were aroused. Jack debated the thing in his

mind for a moment before he spoke again.

"We know perfectly well," he said, "that Anstruther is terribly pressed for ready money. He is certain not to send that check, and it is equally certain that the man will call again for the cash on Saturday morning. It will be an easy matter to get Bates to lend me a plain-clothes man and follow the fellow wherever he goes. But you must understand——"

What more Jack would have said was prevented by the entrance of Anstruther, closely followed by the announcement of dinner. It was not a gay meal, for the host was moody and depressed. He talked brilliantly at times, then lapsed into a reverie, and appeared not to hear when spoken to. Claire rose presently with a sigh of relief, glad to get away from the gloom of the dining-room and its depressing atmosphere. Anstruther smoked half a cigarette, and then threw the end down impatiently.

"I must really get you to excuse me," he said. "But my head is so bad that I can hardly hold it up. I am afraid that even my music will fail to soothe me to-night."

Jack murmured something in the way of polite sympathy. He was glad of the opportunity to be able to escape to the drawing-room, where he sat for a long time discussing the situation with Claire. It was pleasant and soothing to sit there with his arm about her and her head lovingly upon his shoulder; but, happy as they were, they could not altogether shake off the feeling of impending evil. All this time the music of the violin floated mournfully from the study. Eleven o'clock struck, and still the melody went on. Claire roused herself a little presently, and a look of pleased interest crossed her pretty face.

"What a delightful little composition," she said. "I have never heard that before. I am quite sure that is original."

"Listen very carefully," Jack said. "I want you to impress that piece of music on your mind."

The piece was finished at length, and then repeated once more. As the last strains died away, Claire rose from her

comfortable seat and crossed over to the piano. She went through the whole composition quite correctly.

"I am glad it has so impressed you," Jack said. "You will, perhaps, be surprised to hear that Anstruther has never heard that piece of music in his life, and that it was composed by Padini, who has never played it to anybody till last night, when he performed it for Rigby's benefit. Not only this, but he gave Rigby the original manuscript, to get it published for him. I know this is only a small matter, but these small matters will make a mountain of evidence against Anstruther when the time comes."

"It is very extraordinary," Claire murmured, "to think that that music should sound so charming and natural, when we know that all the time the player is a mile or two away. You are sure that my guardian is not in his study, Jack?"

Jack was sure enough on that point. It was a few moments later that Serena came quietly into the room with a request that Mr. Masfield go to the telephone, as some one desired to speak to him on pressing business. Jack rose with alacrity.

"I shall soon be able to prove to you that Anstruther is a long way off, or I am very much mistaken," he said. "Very well, Serena, I will come down at once."

The voice at the other end of the telephone inquired cautiously if that were Mr. Masfield. Jack replied that it was, but even then the questioner did not appear to be satisfied.

"I think I recognize your voice," he said, "but one has to be very careful in sending messages to Panton Square. How goes the music? Anything original to-night?"

"One piece." Jack smiled. "I know what you mean, and I don't mind making you a small bet that you are Inspector Bates."

The voice at the other end of the telephone chuckled.

"You have got it quite right, Mr. Masfield," he said. "I am Bates, sure enough. And you needn't worry about

going down-stairs to see whether or not Anstruther is playing, because he isn't on the premises at all."

"Where are you speaking from?" Jack asked.

Bates replied that he was speaking from a public call office in the neighborhood of Mansion House station. All he wanted to do was to make sure that Jack was still in Panton Square, and now that his mind was easy on this score, he could devote himself to the serious business of the evening. Anstruther had just been shadowed outside the Mansion House station, where he was apparently waiting for the substitute so kindly provided for him by Simple Charlie.

The message ceased here, and the connection was cut off. Jack would have been just a little surprised if he had seen the transformed Bates who had been speaking to him over the line. The inspector crossed the road and disappeared into the shadow. Anstruther stood there, glancing impatiently up and down the road as if waiting for somebody who was late. A figure slouched up to him, and a hoarse voice whispered in his ear.

"Party of the name of Maggs," he said in his gin-and-fog voice. "Pal of Simple Charlie. Old Charlie couldn't get away to-night, so he sent me instead. Don't you be disappointed, gov'nor; you will find me just as clever with them bits of steel as Charles himself. Bit of burglary, ain't it?"

Anstruther nodded curtly.

"We had better walk along," he said. "I suppose your friend explained to you that this little job will put twenty pounds in your pocket? It is a mere matter of opening a safe. The getting into the premises is perfectly simple, because I have come provided with the keys. You know the City and Provincial Bank?"

The other man grinned, and remarked that banks generally were a bit above his form. Anstruther smiled as he reflected that he had the keys of the bank premises proper in his pocket, so that there would be no great difficulty in getting into the counting-house, and

from there to Carrington's private office. As to the night watchmen—that was another matter altogether. In the face of recent happenings, they would be more alert than they had been in the past; but, at the same time, their attention would be bestowed more on the cellars than on the office.

The road was entirely deserted now, as Anstruther crossed the street and gently turned the key in the outer door. A moment later, and the pair were in Carrington's private office. They could afford to turn the lights up, for the iron shutters outside made a perfect screen. In one corner of the room stood the safe upon which the man who called himself Maggs was to operate. Anstruther pointed at it impatiently.

"Get to work at once," he said. "There is something inside that I must take away to-night."

"A fine set of Cellini plate, I presume?" Maggs said, in an entirely different voice. "No, you don't, Mr. Anstruther. If you put your hand in your hip-pocket, I'll blow your brains out. I have the advantage of you here, and I am going to keep it."

"Who the deuce are you?" Anstruther stammered. His hands had fallen to his side, and his face was pale and ghastly. "Who are you?"

The so-called burglar snatched away his wig and ragged beard, and with a handkerchief changed the aspect of his face.

"I am Inspector Bates," he said. "Very much at your service."

CHAPTER XLIV.

CAUGHT!

Bates had laid his plans very carefully. In many respects Rigby had the best of the detective, but this was as much due to circumstances as anything else. Still, when it came to the technical side of the case, Rigby was no match for the inspector. It was nearly nine o'clock before Bates called at Carrington's rooms and asked to see the latter. There was no occasion yet for Bates to assume the very effective dis-

guise with which he was to trick Anstruther. There would be plenty of time for that. Carrington was just finishing his dinner—so his man said. He was not very well, and did not care to see anybody. But Bates put the man aside in his own easy way, and walked into the dining-room without the trouble of announcing himself.

That Carrington was suffering from some mental and physical excitement was perfectly plain. His face was ghastly pale, his eyes were bloodshot, and there was a twitching of his lips which told a plain tale to an experienced officer like Bates. Carrington scowled, and demanded the meaning of this unwarrantable intrusion.

"I don't think you will find it unwarrantable when you have heard me to the finish," Bates said. "Nor will it pay you to take this tone with me. I am an inspector from Scotland Yard, and unless you answer my questions freely, I shall have to put them in a more disagreeable form."

Carrington changed his note altogether. His face became still more pallid. He motioned Bates to a chair. He would have found it hard to have spoken just then. Bates waited a moment to give the other time to recover. Carrington at length found words to ask Bates what his business was with him.

"It is with regard to your affair at the bank," the inspector explained. "You may not be aware of the fact, but the case has been placed in my hands by my superiors."

"Oh, you are alluding to the burglary," Carrington said.

"We will call it a burglary for the present," Bates replied, with a significance that there was no mistaking. "I have gone into the matter carefully, and I have come to the conclusion that there was no burglary at all."

Carrington jumped to his feet with a well-simulated air of indignation. He advanced toward Bates threateningly.

"You insolent scoundrel!" he cried. "What do you mean? Do you know you are dealing with a gentleman and man of honor?"

"Softly, softly," Bates replied. "I think we had better understand one another. I have in my possession at the present moment a warrant for your arrest for fraud and embezzlement, relating to certain jewels and other valuables deposited in your keeping by various clients. It is in my power to execute that warrant at once. The case is much too serious a one for bail, and it is for you to say whether you will remain for the present in your comfortable quarters, or pass at least the next two months in jail."

Carrington made no further show of fight. He collapsed into his chair, and wiped his wet forehead distractedly.

"You don't mean that," he groaned. "There must be some terrible mistake here. Why, all the evidences pointed to an ingenious and daring burglary. The night-watchmen were drugged, as you know, and the thieves employed dynamite to blow up the safes. No one regrets the loss of all those valuables more than I do, but even banks are not secure against the modern burglar. Those safes were crammed full of valuables, as I could easily prove."

"They were," Bates corrected. "But I am in a position to prove a great things, too. You would give a great deal, I suppose, to know where those valuables are?"

Carrington replied to the effect that he would give half his fortune for the desired information. Bates smiled.

"You need not worry about it," he said. "I have a list in my pocket of the big pawnbrokers in London where most of the goods were pledged. In three cases the pawnbrokers in question are in a position to swear to the identity of the man who handled the jewels. You would not, of course, mind meeting these people?"

But Carrington had no reply. He looked so helplessly at Bates that the latter could not but feel sorry for him.

"I am afraid the game is up, sir," he said. "My investigations of this case prove most conclusively that you are at the bottom of the whole thing. We know perfectly well that recent speculations of yours have brought

about a financial crisis in your bank. In your desperate need, you realized the securities which certain clients had left in your hands. It was only when Lady Barmouth called for her gems that the situation became acute. But that will form the basis of another charge."

"But that was all a mistake," Carrington gurgled eagerly. "I sent Lady Barmouth her gems, but they proved to be those belonging to somebody else. I assure you that was quite an error."

Bates shrugged his shoulders impatiently. He was getting annoyed with this man, who refused to follow his lead.

"We know all about that ingenious fraud," he said. "We are quite aware of that clever business of the paste gems, for which you gave two hundred pounds at Clerkenwell. You paid for that rubbish with Bank of England notes marked with the stamp of your establishment. It was a very happy idea of yours and Anstruther's."

Carrington groaned feebly; he began to fear the very worst.

"You seem to know everything," he said. "Perhaps you can tell me the story of the burglary?"

"I am coming to that presently," Bates said coolly. "You were at your wits' ends to know what to do. You knew perfectly well that many of your clients would require their jewels for Lady Barmouth's dance. They were not forthcoming, for the simple reason that they had been pledged. You had not the necessary cunning to devise some scheme to shift the blame from your shoulders, so you called in your friend Anstruther. It was he who hit upon the idea of the burglary. It was you who placed temptation in the way of the night-watchman through the medium of a couple of bottles of drugged port wine. After that the rest was easy. You had only to enter the bank with your own keys—"

"Stop a moment," Carrington cried eagerly. "You seem to forget that even I cannot enter the vaults of the bank without duplicate keys in the possession of various cashiers."

"Now, listen to me," Bates said im-

pressively. "This discussion is absolutely irregular. It is my plain duty to arrest you at once and convey you to Bow Street. But if you help me, I may be in a position later on to do you a service. We know precisely how Anstruther used the dynamite; we know precisely what happened in the vaults, and how most of the few valuables that remained were conveyed to your own private safe. More than that, we are perfectly well aware what fee Anstruther demanded for his trouble. Need I go into the matter of that service of Cellini plate?"

Carrington threw up his hands with a gesture of despair. He was crushed and beaten to the ground by the tremendous weight of evidence with which Bates was overwhelming him.

"It is no use fighting any longer," he said. "I confess to everything. I shall plead guilty, and afford you every information in my power. Do you want me to come along with you now?"

On the whole, Bates rather thought not. He had effected his purpose, and sooner or later Carrington would have to become his prisoner. He knew that the latter would speak freely enough, like the craven coward that he was; but there was Anstruther to be thought of. Bates rose to leave.

"You can remain where you are for the present," he said. "But if you will take my advice, you will make no attempt to escape—you are too carefully watched for that; and now, good night."

Bates went off in the direction of the city, feeling that the last hour had not been wasted. On the strength of recent information, he would have felt justified in arresting Anstruther also. But he had a wholesome admiration for that individual, and the more evidence secured against him the better. Therefore it was that Bates was about to carry out the latter part of the program, in which he was to play the part of substitute for Simple Charlie.

The program had been easily arranged. There had been no difficulty in persuading the burglar to write the desired letter to Anstruther, and Bates

had made up his mind from the first that the mythical Maggs should be none other than himself. From first to last the thing worked admirably. Anstruther was utterly deceived by the detective's admirable disguise, which he had assumed after leaving Carrington, and had fallen headlong into the trap.

Therefore it was that the two men stood facing one another in Carrington's office, Anstruther white and furious, Bates coolly contemptuous, with a revolver in his hand.

"What have you to say for yourself?" Bates asked. "Have you any reason to show why I should not take you straight to Bow Street on the charge of burglary?"

Anstruther was fighting hard to regain possession of himself. Bates could not but admire the marvelous courage of the man. Anstruther's laugh had something quite genuine about it.

"We are making a great fuss over a little thing," he said. "I came here because Mr. Carrington was not well enough to accompany me. There are certain things of mine in my friend's private safe here, and unfortunately he has lost the key. It was imperative that I should have my property tonight, and that will, perhaps, explain my presence here. Does that satisfy you?"

"I should be easily satisfied if it did," Bates said coolly. "I should like to know, for instance, why you require the assistance of a professional burglar. I know perfectly well that you called in the assistance of Simple Charlie, but I was in a position to force that individual's hand—hence my appearance in his place."

"Really, Mr. Bates!" Anstruther smiled. "I had expected better things from you. You are perfectly well aware of the fact that I am acquainted with half the thieves in London. It was no use asking any safe-maker in London to try to pick that lock, because it happens to be a French make. In such awkward circumstances as this it is no new thing to call in a cracksmen when things are wanted in a hurry."

"I am afraid that won't do," Bates said. "You had plenty of time to call in legitimate assistance, whereas as recently as last night you visited Simple Charlie and left a note for him."

Anstruther smiled politely. He was perfectly cool and collected now—a match for any detective in the force.

"We can settle the matter in two minutes," he said. "All you have to do is to call in one of your men from outside and send a note to Carrington, who will reply to the effect that I am here with his full knowledge and consent."

"Can't do it," Bates said curtly. "I have no man to send. As a matter of fact, I am alone in this business."

Anstruther bent down his head to conceal a smile. There was something devilish in the cunning ferocity of his eyes. He had discovered an important fact, and Bates did not seem to understand for the moment what he had given away. He felt quite sure that he had matters in his own hands now. He strolled slowly round the table, and proceeded to examine carefully the lock of the safe.

"Do you really think you could open this?" he asked. "If you could I should have no difficulty in proving to you——" Anstruther broke off suddenly; his left foot shot out dexterously, and Bates came half stumbling to his knees. Like lightning Anstruther grabbed for the revolver. He had Bates' wrist in a grip of steel, forcing his hand back till the fingers were bound to relax their grip on the weapon. A moment later the revolver was kicked away, and the two men were struggling desperately on the floor.

There was no mistaking the look on Anstruther's face. He was going to murder Bates if he could. It would never do for any living soul to know that he was here to-night. Once Bates' mouth was silenced forever, Anstruther could hurry back to Panton Square, and there prove such an alibi as would hold good in any legal court in the world. All these things passed through that wily brain as his hands clutched closer at Bates' throat.

It was touch and go with the latter. The only thing he could do was to fight for his breath, and husband his strength for a final effort later on. He looked straight into the gleaming eyeballs of his assailant now, but he could not see the faintest suggestion of pity there. The world began to dance before his eyes; a thousand stars seemed to be bursting from the dark sky; then came along the corridor the echo of fast-approaching footsteps.

"Curse it," Anstruther muttered. "Another moment, and I should have been safe. Take that, you hound!"

With one final blow he jumped to his feet, and, sprinting across the office floor, darted into the shadow of the night.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE MUSIC STOPS.

Bates was sitting up in bed nursing an aching head, and plotting out schemes whereby he could best retrieve the disaster of the previous night. It was fortunate for the inspector that one of Carrington's night-watchmen should have heard something of the disturbance on the previous night, and come hot-foot to his assistance. There was no great damage done beyond a bruised face and a general shock to the system. Bates felt all the better for a good night's rest, and was now quite ready to carry on the campaign against his powerful foe. It was some time in the afternoon before Jack Masfield put in an appearance at Bates' lodgings, having been summoned there by a special messenger. Jack smiled as he noticed Bates' somewhat dilapidated condition.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "You do not seem to have been as successful as you might—I mean over last night's business. Was the thing a failure, or were you satisfied?"

Bates explained that up to now the battle was a drawn one. He had a feeling that Jack would be able to help him, and that was why he had asked him to call that afternoon.

"I am not in the least dissatisfied with my last night's work," he ex-

plained. "In the first place, we have Carrington absolutely at our mercy. I let him know what we have discovered, and he will do anything for us that we desire. After that, I played the part of the mythical Maggs, and in due course disclosed myself to Mr. Anstruther. Perhaps I was a little too confident; any way, I gave him a chance to murder me, and he responded to the opportunity with absolute enthusiasm. But for the opportune arrival of the night-watchman, Scotland Yard would have lost one of its most distinguished ornaments. It was a very near thing, I assure you."

"But what could he possibly gain by that?" Jack asked.

"Well, you see, I had let him know that I was quite alone in the business," said Bates. "At the same time, he was not aware that my information was so complete. If he could murder me and get safe home without being detected, he was in a position to prove an absolute alibi. Of course, I did not dream that I was running any risk of my life—but that is not the point. You will remember my suggesting to you yesterday the advisability of your dining in Panton Square last night. I suppose that was all right?"

Jack replied that he had followed Bates' instructions out implicitly. He had done all he could in that way.

"Very well, then. You see what I am driving at. I take it for granted that Anstruther's mysterious musical friend was much in evidence last night. I have no doubt that Miss Helmsley and yourself listened with rapt attention to the music in the study."

"We had every opportunity of doing so," Jack said.

"That is precisely what I expected. Anstruther must have left the house a little after ten o'clock, and I don't see how it was possible for him to return much before half past twelve. I suppose you didn't happen to see him when he came in?"

"Indeed I did," Jack said. "It was quite half past twelve when I was leaving the house. The music was still in progress, but when I slipped out of the

front door, Anstruther was rapidly approaching the house, running across the lawn. He seemed very much annoyed and put out when he saw me, and muttered something to the effect that he had heard somebody trying the front door. I understood him to say that he had not been out all the evening, but that was all nonsense. I could see by his boots that he had been walking some considerable distance.

"Of course, you see what the dodge is: he does not leave the house by the door, but by the French window leading from the study to the garden. This window he leaves unfastened, so that he can get back at any time without a soul being any the wiser. Of course, there was always a chance of somebody finding the window unlatched, but that is a small matter."

"Is the window always left open?" Bates asked thoughtfully.

Jack replied that he thought so. Bates smiled with the air of a man who is perfectly well satisfied.

"I am going to get up presently," he said. "After I have had a bath and some tea, I shall be quite fit for duty again. I want you to find some pretext for calling at Anstruther's just after dinner, because I may need your assistance."

"What are you going to do?" Jack asked eagerly.

"Well, in the first place I am going to arrest Anstruther," Bates replied. "In the second instance, I have another little scheme, which we need not discuss now. I want you to go as far as Mr. Rigby's chambers and get him to keep an eye on Padini, and see that last night's program is repeated, if possible. This is rather an important thing. I think I can trust Mr. Rigby to manage it."

Jack went off obediently enough, and subsequently ran Rigby to earth at the offices of the *Planet*. The latter seemed delighted at the turn which affairs were taking. He began to see now that he would be able to carry out for his paper the series of sensational articles required by the proprietor.

"We shall have a splendid scoop," he

said. "Indeed, one might almost make a three-volume novel out of it. I am only too sorry that I can't be at Anstruther's to-night and witness the arrest. I shall leave you to supply all the graphic details. I can easily manage the Padini business this evening by writing to the fellow that I have a check to pay over and shall call at his rooms late to-night; I am sure to find him there. He is very hard up, and the money is certain to fetch him."

"There are other things connected with this business," Jack said, "which puzzle me. For instance, there is that affair of the mysterious Mr. Ferris, whose acquaintance I made at the Great Metropolitan Hotel. I am quite sure, also, that Seymour has some deep design on hand. You may be absolutely certain that that business of the crystal ball played off on Anstruther at Lady Barmouth's dance the other night was not mere fooling."

Rigby was of the same opinion. He was anxious to know if anything had yet been done in the matter of Carrington's private safe and the service of Cellini plate which Anstruther had coolly appropriated for himself. But on this point Jack had no information to offer. He did not doubt that the whole thing would be explained in a few hours now. He killed the day as best he could, and after dinner turned his steps in the direction of Panton Square.

Mr. Anstruther and Miss Helmsley had practically finished, Serena explained, but they had not yet left the dining-room. Anstruther raised his brows significantly as Jack entered the dining-room, but his manner was polite and cordial enough as he invited the visitor to a seat and a glass of claret. He did not look in the least perturbed or put out; on the contrary, Jack had seldom seen him so easy and self-possessed. His neuralgia was quite gone. He had charmed it away as usual, he said, with the soothing aid of music.

"How is it you never bring your violin up to the drawing-room?" Claire asked. "We hardly ever have any duets together."

"After next week," Anstruther promised. "Really, I am a great deal more busy than I appear to be, and I feel it quite easy to play and think at the same time."

Jack glanced across the table significantly at Claire, and she seemed to divine what he was thinking about.

"I thought I knew most of your music," she said, "but there was one little item last night that took my fancy immensely. I feel quite sure that you composed it yourself."

Anstruther disclaimed any such gift. Fond as he was of his violin, it had never occurred to him to try his hand at original composition.

"All the same, I really must get it," Claire persisted. "I am sorry that you do not recall the piece at all. If you will come into the drawing-room with me, and can spare me a few minutes, I will strum the piece over to you. It so fascinated me that I committed it to memory. Do come along for a moment."

Anstruther laughed, as Jack thought, rather uneasily. He tried skilfully enough to divert the conversation into another channel, but Claire's enthusiasm refused to be baffled. Anstruther's face darkened for a moment, and there was a look in his eyes that boded ill to somebody. He rose and walked across toward the door, and up the stairs in the direction of the drawing-room.

"Very well, if you must," he said. "I can give you ten minutes. I dare say it is some silly trifle that I have heard somewhere without recognizing its source."

Claire seated herself at the piano, and played the little piece off with both brilliancy and feeling. As a matter of fact, she had been practising it several times during the afternoon until she had it absolutely correct. The slow, mournful chords died away at length, and then Claire turned to her guardian with a smile.

"That is it," she said. "That is the little piece that so fascinated me last night. Surely you can tell me the name of it and where it came from?"

The question was apparently simple enough, but Anstruther appeared to be absolutely incapable of answering it.

"Do you mean to say you could forget a thing like that?" Claire protested. "It seems to me impossible."

"Perhaps it made less impression upon me than it did you," Anstruther muttered. "I haven't the slightest recollection of playing it myself. In fact——"

Anstruther broke off in absolute confusion. The incident, trivial as it seemed, had upset him altogether. He was about to betray himself by saying that he had never heard the piece before, and that it had no place among his music; but he pulled himself up just in time. He bitterly blamed Pardini's carelessness. It was no part of the program for his double to give him anything but pieces of music with which he was absolutely familiar. What he might have said and done was frustrated by the appearance of Serena, who announced that a gentleman downstairs desired to see Mr. Anstruther.

Jack felt his pulses beating a little faster. Serena's eyes were demure and downcast as usual as she replied to Anstruther's question that the gentleman down-stairs was none other than Inspector Bates, of Scotland Yard. Only just for an instant did Anstruther falter and turn pale, then he was absolutely himself again. He almost wished now that he had not waited so long. He had his ingenious alibi, it was true, but even that might fail. There were so many meshes in the nets of Scotland Yard. In a calm, even voice he ordered Serena to show the stranger upstairs. Bates came at length, a little pallid and bruised, but otherwise little the worse for his night's adventure.

"And what might be your business with me, inspector?" Anstruther asked. "It is some time since I had the pleasure of meeting you. Will you please take a seat?"

"I do not see the necessity," Bates responded. "As my business is private, perhaps you will be good enough to follow me to your study. I will speak if you like, but——"

"You may say anything you please," Anstruther said defiantly.

"Then I arrest you on a warrant, charging you with attempted burglary last night," Bates said pithily. "You were on the premises belonging to the City and Provincial Bank with a felonious intent of breaking into a safe between the hours of eleven and half past twelve. Need I say any more?"

"Amazing," Anstruther laughed. "Fortunately I have my witnesses at hand to prove that I was not off these premises during the hours you mentioned. As a matter of fact, I was in my study playing my violin all the time."

"Sounds ingenious," Bates muttered, "but in these days of clever mechanical contrivances—by the way, is not some one playing the violin down-stairs now?"

Despite his command of himself, a furious curse broke from Anstruther's lips. For even as Bates spoke, there came sounds of liquid melody from the study. Not only was this so, but, furthermore, the piece in question was precisely the same as the one that Claire had just been playing over to her guardian. The girl rose to her feet, and looked across at Jack significantly. Bates smiled in the manner of one who has solved a great problem.

"Really, a most remarkable coincidence," he said. "I am afraid this rather spoils the simple beauty of your alibi, Mr. Anstruther; unless, perhaps, you have some friend who entertains your household at such times as business calls you elsewhere. But let us go down-stairs and see for ourselves."

"No, no," Anstruther cried furiously. "You shall not do it. You shall not interfere. I'll kill you first."

"Come along," Bates responded. "Come with me and witness the solving of the mysterious problem."

CHAPTER XLVI.

A WOMAN SCORNEO.

It was plainly evident that Bates believed in his ability to solve the problem. Anstruther had quite thrown the mask

off by this time, and stood glaring vindictively at the inspector. It was absolutely maddening to a man of his ability to be caught in a sorry trap like this. One of the strongest points in Anstruther's schemes was the fact that hitherto he had always been on the side of the police. He had been regarded as one of them, so to speak, so that many of his ingenious plots had been guided solely by the action of the authorities. It had never once occurred to him that he might have been an object of suspicion at Scotland Yard.

"You might just as well take it quietly," Bates said. "We know the whole thing from start to finish. It will go a great deal easier with you if you give us all the information that lies in your power and save us trouble."

"That is the usual course, I believe," Anstruther sneered. "But you have a different man to deal with in me. I am quite at a loss to understand what you are doing here at all."

Bates shrugged his shoulders, and walked in the direction of the door. He had no difficulty in seeing that Anstruther had made up his mind to see this thing through to the bitter end. Therefore, it was quite useless to try and get him to see matters in a reasonable light. Anstruther stood there, white, silent, and furious, while all the time the amazing music was going on in the study.

Mysterious as the whole thing appeared to be, there was almost an element of farce in it. Here was the very man who relied upon his devotion to his violin to save him in the hour of danger, actually listening, so to speak, to his own performance. He had little doubt what Bates meant to do, for the latter was already half way down the stairs on his way to the study. With a sudden impulse Anstruther followed. He passed Bates with a rapid stride, and, standing with his back to the study door, defied the inspector to enter.

"You do not seem to understand," Bates said. "The warrant I have for your arrest gives me the right of searching the whole house. If you persist in this absurd conduct, I shall have

to call my men in and remove you by force."

The two men faced one another, both angry and excited, and ready to fly at one another's throats. And yet the whole time their ears were filled with the beautiful melody of the music, as it floated from the room behind.

"What are we going to do?" Claire asked. She was standing with Jack at the top of the staircase. "Is it not time that we declared ourselves?"

Jack whispered to Claire to remain where she was a moment, and slipped out of the house into the garden unperceived. It had suddenly occurred to him that perhaps the window leading from the study to the garden was unfastened. He recollected that this was the means by which Anstruther left and returned to the house. It would have been imprudent on the latter's part to use the front door, and there was not much risk in leaving the study window unlatched.

It was just as Jack had expected. The long French window gave to his touch, and a moment later he was in the room. As it happened on the previous occasion, he could see not the faintest trace of any mechanism by means of which the melody was conveyed from the Great Metropolitan Hotel to Pantons Square. And yet the whole room was flooded with it, rising and falling in triumphant strains, as if mocking the intellect of the man who had brought this wonderful result about.

But there was no time to speculate on that, no time for close investigation. On the other side of the door the voices of Anstruther and Bates were rising to a still more angry pitch, and Claire's tones of expostulation came to Jack's ears. As he crossed the room he could see that the key was in the door. He flung it open, and Anstruther came staggering backward into the room, closely followed by the detective.

"You can see that the game is up," the latter said coolly. "Why not make a clean breast of it? I shall find out how this is done, if I have to pull down the house to do it."

Anstruther smiled in a scornful kind

of way, and flung himself doggedly into a seat. He bade Bates do his worst, and prophesied that the police would suffer for this indignity. But Bates was not listening. He was pacing rapidly round the room with his ear to the wall, as if scenting out some clue to the mystery. A moment later, and there came into the room the form of Serena.

One glance at her sufficed to show that she was not the Serena whom Jack had known so long. The demure, downcast eyes were no longer seeking the floor as of old; there was no shrinking and timidity on the part of the woman now. She was changed almost beyond recognition. She walked with a firm, elastic tread, her shoulders were thrown back, and her head uplifted fearlessly. From under his heavy brows Anstruther glanced at her suspiciously.

"Go away," he commanded hoarsely. "How dare you force yourself in here like this! Go, woman."

But the tones of command had evidently lost their power. There was no shrinking on Serena's part. She advanced into the middle of the room as if the place belonged to her.

"No, no," she cried in tones as clear and ringing as Anstruther's own. "Your power has gone forever. For three long, patient years I have waited for this moment. God only knows what my life has been, and what a hell your cruelty has created for me. But the cord is broken now. Only to-night I have learned the truth. I have been your good and faithful servant; I have stooped to do your hateful work; I have been the ally of criminals—of your creature Redgrave, among others; and all because I thought you held my life in the hollow of your hand."

"Tell them the story of your boy," Anstruther sneered.

"I will tell them the truth," Serena cried. "You said you could hang me if you liked. You pretended that in my delirium I had taken the life of my darling child. You were shielding a murderess, as I thought. But it was a black and cruel lie. Give me back my wasted years, you coward; give me back

my sleepless nights and dreary days. But, thank God, that time has passed. My boy is alive—alive! He is safe in the house now!"

Anstruther started as if some loathsome insect had stung him, then dropped sullenly back in his seat again. Bates turned to Serena and called her attention to the music.

"You seem to be in a communicative mood to-night," he said. "You need not fear any one for the future—Redgrave, or anybody else. I understand this last scoundrel is safe in the hands of the New York police, who were wanting him badly. Perhaps you can tell us the meaning of this extraordinary concert we are listening to. If you will be so good——"

Serena made no reply in words, but crossed to the side of the room opposite the door, and tugged at a volume which was the center of a set of some classical dictionary. The volume came away quite easily in her hand, bringing other dummy books with it; and then the interested spectators saw that the books in question were no more than painted gauze. In the orifice disclosed by the stripping away of the sham, there appeared to be something that resembled a mouth of a great silver trumpet. This was partly plugged with a set of sensitive metal plates, which were evidently intended to act as a diaphragm for the record of musical expression.

"There you have the whole thing in a nutshell," Serena said, speaking quite naturally and quietly. "It is very ingenious; and yet, at the same time, it is not entirely original. It is an adaptation of the theater-phone, in connection with a somewhat modified form of telephone. The recording-instrument is situated in my husband's rooms in the Great Metropolitan Hotel, and he has only to start his performance there, and the music sounds here quite as distinctly as if he were actually playing in this apartment. It seems exceedingly simple, now that you know how it is done."

It did seem simple, indeed, after listening to Serena's explanation.

Bates turned to Anstruther, and

asked him if he had anything to say; but the latter shook his head doggedly. He felt quite sure that the game was up, though he had no intention whatever of giving himself away. And yet, despite his danger, he was still the connoisseur enjoying the beautiful music made by Padini's violin.

But to Claire, who had crept into the room unobserved, the whole thing was horrible and unnatural. Such lovely music as Padini was playing now was but a sorry accompaniment to all this vulgar crime and intrigue. The girl shuddered, and placed her hands over her ears as if to shut out the liquid melody.

"Oh, I wish it would stop," she said. "I do wish it would stop."

As if in answer to this prayer, the long, wailing notes died away, and the music melted into nothingness. At the same time, Bates approached the mouth of the trumpet, and blew shrilly on his police whistle. There was a pause just for an instant, and then, to Jack's surprise, came the voice of Rigby clear and distinct.

"Is that you, Inspector Bates?" he asked. "We have just finished at this end. I am afraid there will be no more music to-night, as two of your detectives have most inhospitably insisted upon breaking up our concert, and escorting Signor Padini to Shannon Street police-station. Shall I come round there, or will you come round here? Do you get my voice quite clearly?"

Bates replied grimly that he did. There was no occasion whatever to trouble Rigby any further to-night. Then the inspector turned to Anstruther, and tapped him on the shoulder.

"I think there is no reason to carry this farce any farther," he said. "You will be good enough to consider yourself my prisoner. Would you like to walk to Bow Street, or shall I call a cab?"

Anstruther intimated that it was all the same to him. He knew perfectly well now that the whole thing was exploded. There was something bitter in the reflection that he had been found

out at last and laid by the heels over so paltry a business as the bogus burglary at the City and Provincial Bank.

"I think I'll walk," he said. "No, you need not call any of your men, and you need have no fear of personal violence."

"All right," Bates said. "Though I am still suffering from the shaking up you gave me last night. Come along."

"I must apologize for all this trouble," Anstruther said, turning to Claire, and speaking in quite his natural manner. "I must leave you to manage as best you can for the present. I dare say you will be able to manage with Serena."

He turned curtly on his heel, and walked to the door. Of Jack he took no notice whatever. A moment later the front door closed sullenly, and Anstruther was gone.

"The house smells all the sweeter for his absence," Jack said. "My dearest girl, you can see now what a narrow escape you have had. I only hope, for your sake, that the fellow has not been tampering with your fortune. You must not stay here after to-morrow. The place will be simply besieged by newspaper reporters and interviewers. I must find some home for you——"

"You need not trouble about that, Mr. Masefield," Serena said. "There is one house where both of us will be welcomed with open arms. Need I say that I am alluding to Lady Barmouth's?"

Jack gave a sigh of relief; for the moment he had quite forgotten Lady Barmouth. At any rate, for to-night Claire and Serena could stay where they were, and they could go to Lady Barmouth's in the morning. Then Jack remembered all that Serena had gone through, and warmly congratulated her upon the recovery of her boy.

"It means all the world to me," Serena cried. "It fell out exactly as Miss Helmsley said it would. When that man called to see Mr. Anstruther again, I told him who I was, and he took me to my child at once. The stranger had been very kind to the lad. He knew

nothing of the rascality and villainy behind it all, and he was only too glad to see mother and son united."

"And Padini?" Jack suggested. "You must not forget——"

"I want to forget everything about him," Serena cried. "I shall be glad, really glad, to know that that man is outside the power of doing mischief for the next three years. Do not ask me anything else—do not ask me, for instance, why I was playing the deaf-mute that night at Carrington's rooms. I don't know. I was a mere slave and tool in Anstruther's hands, and had to do exactly as he told me."

"It was only by the merest accident that I discovered how the trick of the music was done, and that I should have had to keep to myself if my dear boy had not been so marvelously restored to me. Perhaps, at some future time, I may be disposed to tell you more. For the present, all I want to do is to sleep. I am longing for that one night's sweet repose which has been so cruelly denied to me the last few years."

Jack said no more. He left the house presently with the intention of seeing Rigby at once, and then of calling on Lady Barmouth the first thing in the morning, and making such arrangements as would conduce to the comfort of Claire and Serena.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE PROOF OF THE CAMERA.

Society generally had plenty to talk about in the way of scandal next morning, when it became known that Spencer Anstruther had been arrested in connection with the burglary of the City and Provincial Bank. The only paper giving anything like an account of the arrest, naturally, was the *Planet*, which paper vaguely hinted at further disclosures in the early future. Jack read the account over the breakfast-table, and smiled as he recognized the hand of Rigby in all this. He would see Rigby presently, and ascertain exactly what had taken place last night at the Great Metropolitan Hotel. First

of all, he had to see Lady Barmouth, who had already heard something of the news. She listened with vivid interest to all that Jack had to say, then announced her intention of going to Pantom Square at once.

"I shall bring my sister and Claire here," she said. "They shall stay as long as they please. As to my sister and her boy, I shall be delighted to have them. I presume there will be some sort of proceedings against Anstruther this morning?"

To the great disappointment of the public, when Anstruther came to be charged at Bow Street the evidence was purely formal. The prisoner had elected not to be represented by a lawyer; and, with a view of expediting the proceedings, he had formally pleaded guilty to the charge, and asked to be committed to the Central Criminal Court.

"Clever chap that," Bates said, as he and Rigby, together with Jack, turned into Covent Garden. "Pretty cool, too. He wants to save time, of course, and get the thing over before we can complete our chain of evidence. But I fancy that by the end of a week we shall be able to produce all the witnesses we want."

"I expect so," Rigby said. "By the way, don't forget about that service of plate. Seymour says it ought to be conveyed to Scotland Yard and the photographs taken at once. I have a letter from Seymour in my pocket in which he asks me to go round and see Sir Frederick Ormond, induce that gentleman to take the sealed crystal ball to your headquarters, and to see that the seal is not broken, except in the presence of one of your leading officials. Then you can get both sets of photographs done at once."

Bates had his hands full for the next few hours. Then, toward four o'clock, he made his way to Carrington's flat. Under plea of indisposition, the latter had not been out for a day or so; but, as a matter of fact, Bates had given him a pretty broad hint to keep clear of the bank premises, and to consider himself more or less as a prisoner on

parole. Carrington's knees knocked together, and his face turned deadly pale as Bates came into the room.

"So you have come again," he stammered. "I hope, perhaps, that—don't say I am your prisoner."

"I am afraid that's what it comes to," Bates said. "We can't let you off altogether, you know. But if you help us, and give us all the information in your power, I'll do my best to get you let off as lightly as possible. It makes all the difference between two years' imprisonment and seven years' penal servitude."

"Am I to come with you now?" Carrington managed to stammer out. "Is there no such thing as bail?"

Bates shook his head. Carrington would have to pass the night, and doubtless a good many succeeding nights, in the police-cells; but, first of all, they were going as far as the bank. Bates explained that there was no reason, for the present, why Carrington should stand confessed as a prisoner. The bank officials need know nothing whatever about it.

What Carrington had to do now was to hand over the service of Cellini plate at present locked up in his private safe. The detective gave his promise that the plate in question should be restored to its proper owner in due course, though he refused to gratify Carrington's curiosity as to why he had specially selected this particular art treasure.

An hour later the Cellini plate was safe in Bow Street, together with the crystal globe, and before the week was out both articles had undergone some mysterious process of photography, not altogether unconnected with sheets of glass. Meanwhile, Anstruther was preparing his defense as best he could, and Carrington had been twice remanded on a charge of fraudulently dealing with the property of his clients. The two cases excited the greatest interest, and on the following Monday morning the Central Criminal Court was packed with society people eager to hear the charges against Spencer Anstruther.

Anstruther stood there, quite calm and collected, with just the touch of a

cynical smile on his lips. He looked round the court as if in search of acquaintances, but no one responded. Many people whom he knew quite well affected to look over his head. But cool and deliberate as he was, Anstruther had all his work cut out to keep his feelings in control when the barrister who represented the Crown proceeded to call witnesses.

The name of Seymour resounded down the corridor, and a tall man with his face muffled up and a slouch-hat on his head stepped into the box. He bowed gravely to the judge, and apologized for wearing his hat. A moment later his hat and coat slipped away, and he turned his face half defiantly to the light. There was an instant's breathless pause, then a veritable shout of astonishment, as the Nostalgo of the posters stood face to face with those whose curiosity had been so deeply touched during the past four months.

"My name is Seymour," he said quietly, as if quite unconscious of the tremendous sensation his appearance had excited. "I have known the prisoner for some years. Before I unfortunately made his acquaintance, I was not the human wreck you see now, but a man like my fellows. But I need not go into that. What I propose to do now is to tell the story of the burglary at the City and Provincial Bank.

"Previous to my visit to Mexico, I occupied with Mr. Carrington the rooms which are now his. I have in my pocket a latch-key which opens the front door. It matters little now why I wanted to make a search of Mr. Carrington's rooms, but I did make that search, and I was hidden in the conservatory behind the smoking-room with Mr. John Masfield on the night that the prisoner and Carrington planned the sham burglary at the bank.

"The whole scheme was revealed to us, and I shall be prepared to tell the jury presently what steps I took to see the so-called burglary carried out. It is sufficient for the present to say that it was carried out, and that I witnessed the whole proceedings in the company of Mr. Masfield and a journalist on

the staff of the *Planet*, Mr. Rigby by name.

"I should like, at this point, to call the attention of the jury to what we saw when the bank strong-room was forced. So far as valuables are concerned, the safe was practically empty, save for a service of Cellini silver plate. Other witnesses beside myself will tell you that the prisoner claimed that plate as a reward for the ingenious way in which he had plotted to preserve Carrington's reputation.

"When I heard this, a sudden inspiration came to me. With a piece of greasy rag I hastily smeared the surface of the set of plate. I will come to my reason for doing that presently. When the whole affair had been finished, the prisoner was half minded to take the service of plate back with him at once to his house in Panton Square. But Carrington dissuaded him from this on the grounds of prudence. Therefore the prisoner carried the plate up-stairs and deposited it in Carrington's private safe. There it remained for a day or two, pending some way of conveying it to Panton Square.

"But in the meanwhile something happened which aroused the prisoner's suspicions. He made up his mind that he would himself remove the plate from Carrington's safe by means of another burglary. Carrington refused to have anything to do with this, but the prisoner got his own way by the simple expedient of stealing Carrington's keys. The prisoner is more or less intimately acquainted with some of the cleverest thieves and housebreakers in London.

"There was no time to call in an honest expert to open Carrington's safe, but the prisoner was equal to the occasion. He called upon a well-known housebreaker who answers to the name of Simple Charlie. I know this, because for some time I have been watching the man in the dock. I have my own reasons for keeping quiet and living in an out-of-the-way place, and I have a set of rooms fitted up in what is more or less a common lodging-house.

"By good fortune the man known as Simple Charlie had rooms in the same

block of buildings. When the prisoner called upon him the housebreaker was out, so that a note was left for him. This note I managed to get hold of and read. Together with a friend of mine named Ferris, we laid a little plot for Simple Charlie. We compelled him to find a substitute who would operate upon the safe, and that substitute was no other than Inspector Bates, as doubtless he will tell you later on."

It must be clearly understood that Seymour did not stand in the box and reel off his evidence in the glib way of one who is making a speech for the prosecution. On the contrary, the fascinating evidence he gave was in reply to questions asked by the representative of the Crown, occasionally supplemented by a query or two from the judge.

All this time Anstruther stood in the dock, his face knitted in an ugly frown. Despite his easy air, his confidence was fast deserting him. Any other man would have been crushed and broken by the deadly weight of a testimony like that of Seymour's. In his heart of hearts Anstruther was sick and frightened. Never for a moment had he dreamed of anything like this. Seymour stood before him without a trace of expression on his scarred, repulsive face. And yet every word he uttered was as another month on the long sentence he was already anticipating.

Anstruther came out of a dream presently, and realized with a start that Seymour's deadly revelations were still going on. A moment later, and the Crown counsel suggested that Seymour should stand down for a moment, and that Bates should take his place. The detective came into the box alert and smiling. He told how he had impersonated the mythical Maggs, and how he had accompanied Anstruther to the City and Provincial Bank.

"At this point I should like to ask you a few questions," said the counsel for the Crown. "I understand that you have become possessed of the service of silver plate to which the last witness has already alluded. He spoke just now of some device of his whereby the serv-

ice of plate was smeared with grease as it lay on the floor of the vault, and before it was conveyed to Carrington's safe. Now, has this any important bearing on the case?"

"I think you will find that it has an exceedingly important bearing on the case," Bates said. "You will remember, sir, that Mr. Seymour made a special request that the plate should be carefully photographed. You will remember, also, that the prisoner himself carried the plate to the safe and deposited it inside. We have had the plate carefully photographed, with a view to identification by means of finger-marks. That is what we call a part of the Bertillon system. But perhaps I had better explain."

Bates' explanation was carefully followed by an almost breathless audience. Bates held up a sheet of glass in his hand.

"I have here," he said, "a photograph taken from a silver cigar-case. It is the considerably enlarged impression of finger-prints left on the cigar-case by a burglar who was scared away before he could secure his booty. By comparison of this impression from the cigar-case side-by-side with one of the other permanent prints at Scotland Yard we were enabled to identify and convict the thief."

"Quite so," the barrister said. "The jury follows you. Is it your intention to prove that on the Cellini plate marks have been found corresponding with the lines on the prisoner's hand?"

"This is preposterous," Anstruther cried. "It is nothing less than a vile conspiracy. I defy the police to be able to prove that the marks of my fingers are on the plate. And even if there was some resemblance discovered it would be out of the question for the police to compare them with any impression of my own."

"You are doing no good to your case," the judge interposed. "You will have plenty of opportunity to ask questions later on."

"With the permission of the jury I shall prove that," Bates said. "Before I proceed any further, may I ask your

lordship if you will have Sir Frederick Ormond called? Sir Frederick will recollect the night of Lady Barmouth's dance, when one of the guests, disguised as a magician, gave him a sealed packet to take care of. When that packet came to be unsealed and photographed by our experts, we had no difficulty in discovering——"

A deep groan broke from Anstruther's lips.

"By Heaven!" he cried. "I had forgotten the crystal!"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

PROOF POSITIVE.

Anstruther's denunciation of himself rang out loud and clear, so that it was heard to the uttermost parts of the court. Nothing could have condemned him more than that speaking cry; there was wanted no witness more damning than his white face and staring eyes. In sooth, he had quite forgotten the crystal globe. It all came back to him now, and he saw vividly and clearly the semicomedy which had been enacted at Lady Barmouth's dance by himself and the so-called magician.

To a man of Anstruther's capabilities the idea that he had walked headlong into a trap laid for him was maddening. He had devised so many cunning schemes for the lowering of others into confessions of crime, that it was all the more galling to find himself hoist with his own petard.

It was in vain that he strove to recover the ground he had lost. He could see a grim smile on the face of the judge, and even a suggestion of amusement in the jury-box. He seemed as if about to burst into passionate protest, then placed his hands upon his lips, and maintained instead a stolid silence.

"Perhaps I had better make a little explanation here," the counsel for the prosecution said. "A great deal turns on the matter of this crystal ball. The witness Seymour has already explained to the court the story of the Cellini plate up to a certain point. That story we shall substantiate presently by call-

ing the witnesses Masefield and Rigby. Your lordship will understand that Lady Barmouth's now historic dance took place subsequent to the robbery at the City and Provincial Bank.

"The witness Seymour has already told you that he overheard the whole conspiracy between the prisoner and Carrington, by means of which the public would have been deluded into believing that a great robbery had taken place. The witness Seymour has also informed you that he had meant to be present when this bogus burglary took place—an event that subsequently happened. It was only when the Cellini plate lay outside the bank strong-room that a most ingenious idea occurred to Seymour.

"He has told us how, by means of a greasy rag, he smeared over the service of plate, which was subsequently placed by Anstruther's own hands in Carrington's safe. Beyond all question, the imprints of Anstruther's fingers must have remained on the plate; indeed, we shall prove this beyond question before long. By way of making the thing absolutely certain, it was necessary to get a proper impression of Anstruther's hands. Hence the comedy of the magician—a little comedy which shall be explained later—which character was quite easily carried out at a fancy dance like Lady Barmouth's. I am aware, my lord, that my proceeding is a little irregular, but I want to clear the thing up as I go along. If the prisoner has any objection, I will, of course, conduct my case——"

"The prisoner has no objection whatever," Anstruther growled. "I say the whole thing is a conspiracy, and a rascally one at that."

"The proceedings are somewhat irregular," the judge interposed, "but seeing that the prisoner declines to be legally represented——"

Anstruther shrugged his shoulders, and the prosecuting counsel went on. He had little more to say on the present head. He now proposed to call Sir Frederick Ormond.

The popular young statesman stepped into the witness-box with a jaunty air,

and a smile which suggested amusement; in fact, he seemed to regard the whole thing in the light of a very good joke.

"I want you, Sir Frederick," the Crown lawyer went on, "to tell us exactly what happened in regard to this magician business at Lady Barmouth's house the other night."

"Really, there is very little to tell you," Ormond smiled. "I regarded it as all part of the fun. I was sitting close to the table occupied by the prisoner and the mysterious magician; in fact, I regarded the whole thing as a pure piece of comedy got up between those gentlemen to amuse the guests."

"You had no notion of the magician's name, then?" the lawyer asked. "You were not taken into the secret?"

"Oh, no. It seemed to me to be a very clever piece of acting. I must confess I was just a little impressed when the crystal was placed in the box, after being firmly held by the prisoner for a few moments. The magician asked for the box to be sealed, which was done, and the thing subsequently passed into my possession."

"Stop one moment," Anstruther cried. "That box was sealed up and taken away by you. Nobody else touched it?"

The witness explained that nobody handled the box besides himself until Inspector Bates fetched it away under an authority from Scotland Yard. Sir Frederick went on to explain that he had been present when the seal of the box was broken.

"Nobody could tamper with it during the time you had it, I suppose?" Anstruther asked. "You kept it under lock and key?"

"The whole time," the witness cried. "You must understand that I am quite used to keeping valuable documents and that kind of thing. I took that box straight home, and locked it securely away in a drawer in my safe, where it remained until the police fetched it."

Asked if he had any further questions to put, Anstruther sullenly declined. He still harped upon the string that this was a criminal conspiracy got up

against him by the police, and insinuated that the mysterious magician was nothing else than a detective smuggled into Lady Barmouth's house for the purpose of trapping him.

"I think it would be as well, my lord, to sweep away this impression at once," the Crown counsel exclaimed. "I propose to put the magician in the box without delay."

Anstruther stared open-mouthed as Seymour once more came forward. The prisoner's quick intellect saw the whole scheme quite clearly now. Pressed as he was, and in danger as he was, he had just a touch of a grim smile of approval. It was a trap entirely after his own heart. Yet his eyes held a menace as they met those of Seymour. The latter returned the gaze. There was a merciless gleam in his own pupils as he faced the jury-box.

"Here we have the mysterious magician," the Crown counsel explained. "Perhaps you will tell us how you came to think of this thing. A mere outline will do."

"It came to me when I was watching those men in the vaults of the bank," Seymour explained in his deep, ringing voice. "I am very much interested in crime and criminals, and more than interested in the prisoner at the bar. I cannot forget—I shall never forget—the fact that, but for him, I should be as other men. To be revenged on him, and to expose one of the greatest scoundrels the world has ever seen, I came back to England. I found the prisoner a popular figure in society. I discovered that my task would be no easy one. I had, moreover, to be careful—my face is one that it is not easy to disguise."

"From the very first good fortune was on my side. I made one discovery after another—all tending to the discredit of the prisoner at the bar. I have already explained to the court how I became in a position to overhear the conspiracy that led to the robbery of the bank. Other witnesses will tell you in greater detail what happened that night at the bank. It was only when I heard the prisoner coolly ar-

-ranging to appropriate that magnificent service of plate that my idea occurred to me. I was going to prove that the plate had been through Anstruther's hands. Of course, I am quite familiar with the Bertillon system, and here was a chance of putting it into practise. I hastily smeared the silver with grease, in order that the marks should be all the more distinct."

"What does all this acting lead to?" Anstruther cried.

"I am just coming to that," Seymour said quietly. "I knew that when the plate came to be photographed by the police, the finger-prints would show quite clearly on the glass slide. It is necessary to have a corresponding set of prints, hence my idea of the magician and the crystal ball. As a matter of fact, Lord Barmouth is a great friend of mine; indeed, we have suffered a lot at the hands of the prisoner. It was, therefore, not difficult for me to procure an invitation to Lady Barmouth's dance, which I attended in the dress of a magician. I was the magician. I arranged the plan myself, and I obtained the impression of those finger-tips, which will be seen presently, when they are compared with those taken from the Cellini plate. I have nothing more to say for the present."

Anstruther intimated that he had no questions to ask the witness. He had come into court prepared to take advantage of anything in his favor, trusting to his intelligence and audacity to pull him through. But not for a moment had he guessed how strong a case the police had piled up against him. Not that he gave the police any credit for the business at all. He could see quite clearly that they would have done nothing without the aid of Seymour. Had the latter not taken in hand the matter, the police would never have discovered his connection with the bogus burglary; and, however much Carrington might subsequently have suffered, the main rogue in the play would have gone off free.

It was a dramatic story that Seymour had told the court, and every word that he had said was followed

with the most rapt attention. The sensation of seeing Nostalgo in the flesh would have been enough for most people; but when one of the most mysterious personages that had ever excited the attention of London stood up like this, the central figure of a great crime, the excitement was multiplied a hundredfold.

There was a pause here, and the lawyer of the Crown looked significantly at Bates. The latter rose, and produced a cardboard box and something that looked like an exaggerated camera. There was a breathless pause, for everybody was on the tiptoe of expectation. Even the judge leaned forward eagerly, wondering what was going to happen next.

"We are going to prove the identification of the finger-marks," the lawyer explained. "For this purpose we shall have to darken the court, and throw the photographs on a large sheet which has been pinned to the wall at the back of the building. I trust your lordship will have no objection to this course."

The judge was understood to say that he objected to nothing calculated to further the ends of justice. The fashionable audience thrilled. Society settled down to the knowledge that it was going to have a new sensation. Ladies ceased the rustling of their fans, and the whispering and giggling stopped, for here was a drama far more realistic and terrible than anything ever seen upon the stage. A man's future literally hung upon the fair white cloth suspended from the wall at the end of the court.

All of the lights went out, until there was nothing left but the pallid flame of the lantern lamp, which faintly picked out the eager eyes and parted lips of the excited spectators. Then the lamp vanished, and almost immediately a brilliant disk of light was thrown on the white sheet. In the long lane of flame the little motes of dust and fluff danced and flickered. Here and there, as a hand or an arm went up from those at the back of the lantern, ghostly accusing shadows seemed to flit. Out of the darkness the

voice of the Crown counsel came with a startling suddenness.

"In the first instance," he said, "we propose to throw on the screen the magnified photograph of certain finger-impressions taken from the Cellini plate. These photographs were made at Scotland Yard, and developed by the expert who is now assisting us in this matter. Here, my lord and gentlemen of the jury, is the first of the magnified photographs."

The great, white, shining disk disappeared as if by magic for a moment, and then upon it there stood out a wonderful reproduction of the right and left palms and finger-tips of a human hand. Magnified so largely, every line and scar and little filament could be seen. It was as if some painstaking engraver had worked up the whole thing under a powerful microscope.

"There we have the impression of the prisoner's hands as taken from the Cellini plate," the lawyer went on. "If we are wrong, it is for the prisoner to prove it. But to make matters absolutely certain, the next plate will show the same finger-prints as taken from the crystal ball. We know from the highest authority that the crystal ball was last in the hands of the prisoner."

The photograph vanished, the great, white disk shone out again, and once more it was obscured by an almost precisely similar photograph. It would have been an expert, indeed, who could have found out any dissimilarity between the two pictures.

"And now, to make matters doubly sure," the lawyer said, "we propose to reproduce the two photographs superimposed one on top of the other."

Another exciting moment followed, a pause of almost painful interest, and then the two slides were placed in the lantern at once. They stood out on the sheet, just a shade misty and indistinct, like a badly printed picture; but the veriest novice there could see at once for himself that they were the same hands. As suddenly as they had vanished the lights flashed up again, and every eye was turned upon Anstruther's white and rigid face.

"My lord," he said, in a hoarse, strained voice, "with your permission, I should like this adjourned until to-morrow."

CHAPTER XLIX.

ON THE BRINK.

It was quite evident that the strong man was breaking down under the strain of these damning proofs. He would, apparently, have said more if he could, but his lips were dry, and the back of his throat appeared to have turned to ashes. With a shaking hand he lifted the glass of water which had been placed on a little ledge before him, and drank it down eagerly.

"What object do you expect to gain by this course?" the judge asked. "If you have any witnesses to call——"

Anstruther intimated that he had. The eager audience appeared to be disappointed. It was as if they had just witnessed the first act of a powerful drama which had ended abruptly owing to some unforeseen circumstance. Still, the prisoner was likely to have his own way in this, seeing that he was undefended by counsel; indeed, it was only fair that no obstacle should be put in his way.

"Very well, then," the judge said briefly. "The case is adjourned till ten o'clock to-morrow morning."

Five minutes later the court was deserted, and another judge was listening to some prosaic case of no importance whatever. Seymour had made his way rapidly out of court, followed by a curious crowd. He was quite calm and collected, though he had taken the precaution to hide his features as much as possible. Jack and Rigby caught him just at the moment that he was entering his cab.

"Where are you going to?" the latter said. "I have got a thousand questions to ask you. Don't run away like this."

"I wasn't going anywhere in particular," Seymour explained. "I have nothing to do but to kill time. It seems to me that I have very little more to do

in the way of ridding the world of Mr. Spencer Anstruther. Call it unchristian if you like, but there is a feeling deep in my heart that I shall be able to rest in future without the wild desire of always being at that fellow's throat. I don't think they will want me to-morrow morning."

"What do you suppose Anstruther is up to?" Jack asked.

"Suicide," said Seymour curtly. "I know that man far better than either of you. And if this verdict goes against him to-morrow—as assuredly it will—he will find some way of putting an end to his life."

Jack looked significantly at Rigby, who nodded.

"Come round to my rooms," he suggested, "and let us talk this matter over. And now that you have once appeared in public, and now that you have once told part of your story in the witness-box, you might, at least, disclose the rest of it to two sympathetic friends like ourselves."

Just for a moment Seymour seemed to hesitate.

"Very well," he said. "If you don't get it from me you will from Lord Barmouth. If it had not been for Ferris and your discovery of him at the Great Metropolitan Hotel, nothing would have induced me to say a word. But I have more than a hope now that before long I shall stand before the world a changed man, and be able to take my place among my fellow creatures without being the subject of vulgar and idle curiosity. I will tell you everything when we get as far as your rooms."

It was over a whisky and soda and a cigar that Seymour proceeded to tell his story. Both Jack and Rigby had heard the best part of it before. They knew all about the Mexican tribe and the dangers of the gold-belt, but the cream of the mystery to them was the way in which a man of ordinary appearance could be transformed into so repulsive an object.

"The whole thing," said Seymour, as he approached the most fascinating part

of his narrative, "was the way in which those people revenged themselves upon outsiders who had the temerity to invade the region of the gold-belt. Mind you, they were a powerful tribe, and in some remote age or other had evidently been highly civilized.

"At the time Ferris and Barmouth and myself had the misfortune to find ourselves prisoners in their hands, they were absolutely eaten up with priestcraft. As I think I told you before, the most powerful man in the tribe was not a native at all, but an Englishman. You will not be surprised to hear that the Englishman's name was Anstruther. I did not know then as I know now what that man had gone through to learn the secret of where the great masses of gold were hidden. Interrupting my narrative for a moment—have either of you ever noticed a faint resemblance between Anstruther and any other Nostalgo like myself?"

"I have," Jack cried. "Especially in moments of passion."

"That I can quite easily understand," Seymour went on. "When Anstruther first fell into the hands of those people he was served in exactly the same way as I was served myself; in other words, one of those diabolically clever surgeons in the tribe turned him into a Nostalgo. Don't ask me how it is done; don't ask me to explain how the muscles are cut and knotted and twisted so as to give one the hideous deformity of face which is my curse at present.

"But Anstruther carried the same intolerable burden in his day. Why he was retained among the tribe; why he was not sent out into the world as an example to others, is not for me to say. Perhaps he made himself useful, for he is a clever man. Perhaps they had need of his services. At any rate, the devilish surgeon who could make a man look like a hideous demon fully understood the art of restoring a face to its normal aspect."

"But Ferris has discovered a surgeon who can do that," Jack explained. "He has already told us so."

"It is on Ferris' little Frenchman that I mainly rely," Seymour said. "Other-

wise, I should fade out of this business, and you would see me no more."

"There is one thing I cannot understand," Rigby put in. "Why did Anstruther cause all those posters to be placed on the principal hoardings of London?"

"Because Ferris had escaped him," Seymour explained. "You see, he wanted Ferris very badly. He could blackmail him, and hoped to go on doing so with impunity. But Ferris gave his tormentor the slip, and placed himself in the hands of that clever French surgeon. Once the cure was complete, Ferris could have passed Anstruther in the street without the least fear of being recognized. He had only to change his name, and the thing was done."

"But I don't quite understand yet," Jack said.

"Well, you see, Ferris is a very sensitive man, and cursed with a lively imagination. That was where Anstruther's wonderful intellect came in. He had lost his man, and was determined to find him once more. Hence those accusing posters that were destined to meet Ferris' eye at every turn, and so play upon his nerves that he would be glad to give himself up, and make the best terms he could. It was just the sort of scheme to appeal to Anstruther, and I am quite sure that if Ferris had not met his friend the surgeon, the plan would have been brilliantly successful.

"And now, if you don't mind, I should like to go as far as the Great Metropolitan Hotel and talk this matter over with Ferris. I am not in the least likely to be called to-morrow; indeed, it seems to me that I have finished my task so far as Anstruther is concerned. This being so, the sooner I place myself in the hands of the French surgeon the better. My word! If you could only understand the life I have led the past three years!"

Seymour turned away, and hid his face for a moment. The other two could respect and understand his feelings, for a long pause followed. When Seymour looked up, he was more calm

and collected. He pitched his cigar into the fireplace, and suggested calling a cab and going off to the Great Metropolitan Hotel at once. Ferris appeared only too glad to see them; indeed, he was much better and more cheerful than he had been a night or two ago, when Fate had so strangely brought Jack and himself together. Most of the plaster had been removed from his face by this time; and, so far as his visitors could see, there were only the faintest traces that the knife had been used to remove the terrible brand of the Nostalgia scourge.

"I expect to be out in two or three days," Ferris explained. "I shall walk the streets with all the more pleasure now that I know there is no chance of meeting Anstruther. I have just been reading an account of the trial in one of the evening papers."

Seymour grasped his old comrade's hand, and drew him eagerly to the light. It was brilliant sunshine outside, so that the face of Ferris was picked out clearly. Despite his assumed calmness, there was a trembling anxiety in Seymour's eyes. Long and earnestly did he gaze at the pale features of his friend.

"Yes," he muttered. "Yes, I can hope at last. What a wonderful operator your surgeon must be. So far as I can see, you have no marks whatever, except here and there some star-shaped scars, which will vanish in the course of a few days."

"They will be gone altogether at the end of a week," Ferris said. "At least, so my doctor says."

"Amazing!" Seymour cried. "Why, I myself have tried specialists in nearly every capital in Europe. Every one of them was utterly ignorant of how the thing had been brought about, and not a single operator of the lot could give me the faintest hope of my ever being any better; and yet here you find a comparatively unknown man, who places his finger on the right spot at once. How did he manage it?"

"That is quite easily explained," Ferris said. "You will not be surprised to hear that this Doctor Benin has led a

life of adventure. He was out in Mexico four years ago with an exploring party, and accidentally came in contact with the same tribe that has cost us both so dear."

"Ah," exclaimed Seymour. "Now I begin to understand. I presume he came under the ban of the tribe, who made a Nostalgo out of him, and turned him out as hideous as the rest of us."

"You have guessed it exactly," Ferris said gravely. "For over a year Benin was experimenting on the muscles of the face. He discovered, at length, that certain of these muscles had been drawn up by some ingenious process, and partially paralyzed. This it was that gave the face of every Nostalgo its peculiarly hideous appearance. Benin discovered at length a means by which the temporary paralysis of the muscles could be removed, and a man's normal expression restored to him."

"You know what I was at one time—look at me now! I tell you that in a month from now you can be absolutely restored to the world, without people shuddering and turning away as they pass you in the street. The same remark applies to Lord Barmouth. Once Anstruther is out of the way, we shall come back to our own again, and know the meaning of happiness once more."

"I think that Barmouth ought to know this," Jack said. "I have already told him about Mr. Ferris, and he is anxious for a meeting to be arranged. But I must go off now, and inform him how successful the operation has been."

Jack found Barmouth pacing up and down the study in no enviable frame of mind. On inquiry it turned out that Anstruther had sent Barmouth a summons to appear at the trial the following morning and give evidence on his behalf.

"Of course, this is a mere act of simple spite," he said. "He merely wants to expose me to the gaze of the world, and thus spoil the rest of my miserable life for me; but I shall go—I have quite made up my mind to that. At the same time, Anstruther will not realize his purpose. I shall take the precaution to practically hide my face with strips of

sticking-plaster, and let it be understood that I am suffering from the result of an accident."

Jack proceeded to turn the conversation in the direction of Doctor Benin. He could not complain that he lacked an interested listener. Barmouth would see Benin without delay; indeed, he would call upon him after he had given evidence at the trial to-morrow. There would be no difficulty about this, Jack said, for Benin was pretty sure to attend the hearing in person.

Jack's prophecy was borne out next morning by the appearance of Benin in the court. The first witness called was Barmouth, who, true to his promise, had disguised himself almost beyond recognition. As he stepped into the witness-box, Anstruther turned upon him savagely from the dock. Then the face of the latter, with the light upon it, was plainly visible to the little French doctor. Heedless of his surroundings, heedless of the solemnity of the occasion, the Frenchman jumped to his feet, and pointed a shaking finger in Anstruther's direction.

"Murderer, murderer!" he cried. "Dog, is it you?"

Anstruther paused, and threw up his hands like a man who is shot. He fell back, a collapsed heap, on the floor of the dock. A warder rushed forward and raised the prostrate figure.

"I think he is dead, my lord," he said simply.

CHAPTER L.

AGAINST THE WORLD.

Anstruther lay there to all appearances quite dead. So swift and dramatic had the whole thing been, that nobody moved for a moment; indeed the greater portion of the excited audience did not seem to grasp what had happened. Rigby turned and looked at Benin, who was frowning in the direction of the dock, and breathing hard, as if he had run fast and far. Then one of the warders in the court moved to the assistance of his colleague, and between them they raised the prisoner so that his haggard face appeared over the

edge of the rail. With an assumption of indifference, the Frenchman dropped back into his seat again.

"Surely he is not afraid of you," Jack whispered. "And yet I feel quite certain that your appearance frightened him terribly."

"He has good need to be afraid of me," Benin growled. "I could hang that man—I could prove him guilty of murder. For, look: that man and myself have met in Paris. You have little notion of the extent of his crime. But he is not dead—men of that type do not die so easily. See, he is opening his eyes again!"

Anstruther had struggled into an upright position, and was feebly gasping for water. He gave one half-frightened glance in the direction of the Frenchman, who shrugged his shoulders, as if to say the whole affair was no business of his.

"I shall not betray him," he whispered to Rigby. "It is a painful case, which will be no better for being dragged into the light of day. Besides, that man will be punished enough; a long term of imprisonment will be worse to him than hanging. He understands, now, that I am not going to betray him."

Anstruther was himself again at last. He stood rigid and erect; there was the faint suggestion of a smile upon his face.

"Merely a passing weakness," he murmured. "I have to apologize to the court for the trouble I am giving. May I be allowed to make a statement?"

"It would have been far better if the statement had come through your counsel," the judge said. "I warned you from the first that you were imperiling your position by refusing to accept legal aid. If the jury finds——"

"The jury may find me guilty or not," Anstruther said. "I am sufficiently strong a man to know when I am beaten. Therefore I do not propose to waste the time of the court by carrying my defense any further. I have assisted the police on many occasions; indeed, I have been a great help in bringing a number of notorious crimi-

nals to justice. But I pay the prosecution this compliment—never once in the whole course of my career have I worked out anything neater than the scheme which has placed me in my present position.

"I desire to plead guilty to the whole thing. I did conspire with Mr. Carrington over that bank business, and with my own hands I removed the Cellini plate to the custody of Carrington's private safe. I am not in the least penitent. I am not in the least sorry for myself. In the circumstances, I would act in precisely the same way again. You may do what you like with me, and pass any sentence you think fit. I don't think there is any need for me to say more."

The speaker bowed gravely to the judge and resumed his seat, which he had asked for as a favor. Failing any reply on the part of the Crown attorney, the judge began to sum up the case. He made no comment, but curtly and dryly sentenced the prisoner to fourteen years' penal servitude. The latter rose to his feet, and intimated that he was ready. With a firm step and the faint shadow of a cynical smile on his lips, he walked down the steps and thus disappeared from the society of his free fellow men. The whole thing was over now, and the dramatic trial was finished. It was, perhaps, a fitting ending to a sensational case, which had been full of surprises from beginning to end. In spite of it all Jack looked grave and somewhat anxious. Now that the affair was over, he could find it in his heart to have a little pity for Anstruther.

"Why so grave and silent?" Rigby asked.

"I think you understand," Jack said quietly. "It always seems to me a sad thing to see a man of such brilliant talents in so degraded a situation. Anstruther might have done anything. With an intellect like his he might have climbed to the highest places. And yet he preferred deliberately to remain a criminal."

"The criminal instinct must have been always there," Benin said. "There

are some men who cannot go straight, and your brilliant Anstruther is one of them."

The audience was pouring out of the court now, talking eagerly and excitedly of the events of the morning. Only a few people remained; and, glancing indifferently over them, Jack noted the pale, anxious features of Carrington. The man lingered behind, as if afraid to face the open air. He shrank back shaking and despairing as Bates walked over in his direction.

"Very sorry, Mr. Carrington," said the latter, "but my duty is quite clear before me. We had our own reasons for not placing you in the dock along with your friend, because we might have had to call you as a witness. As I promised you, I will do all I can to let you down as easily as possible, but I hold a warrant for your arrest on the grounds of theft and conspiracy, and I am bound to execute it. You will be good enough to come this way, please."

The wretched man whined and whimpered. But there was nothing for it now but to follow the detective and, so far as Carrington was concerned, the story is finished. By this time Jack and his companions were in the street. They lingered there chatting together, uncertain as to what to do next, when Benin proceeded to solve the problem. He suggested the advisability of his having an interview with Lord Barmouth without delay.

"You tell me his lordship has already heard of me," he said. "After my own experiences, I can imagine what his feelings have been the last few years. I want to see him at once, and convince him that within a month he will be free to stand before his fellow men."

Barmouth had lost no time in leaving the court directly he discovered that there would be no occasion for him to enter the witness-box.

When Jack and the others reached Belgrave Square, Barmouth had already removed the strips of plaster from his face, and was walking up and down his study with the restless air of one whose mind is ill at ease. All the

same, he seemed to divine the cause of Benin's presence, for he held out his hand and smiled gratefully.

"I know you come to me in the guise of a friend, Doctor Benin," he said. "Is it too much to hope that you can cure me as you cured my friend Ferris?"

"There is no doubt about it whatever," the Frenchman said. "It is all a matter of an operation on the muscles of the face. You will be yourself again; even that horrible yellow tinge will disappear from your skin. I should like, if possible, to operate upon Seymour and yourself at the same time. I dare say you have some quiet country-place that we could go to?"

There was more than one such retreat, as Barmouth proceeded to explain. They talked over the matter eagerly and earnestly for some time, until a message arrived stating that Anstruther earnestly desired an interview with Lord Barmouth. The latter started and shook his head. He had no disposition whatever to see Anstruther again. But as he thought the matter over, kindlier thoughts prevailed. After all, the man was past all power of mischief, and despite the way in which he had carried himself off, must have felt his position most keenly. On the whole, Barmouth decided to go.

He found Anstruther pacing up and down his roomy cell. The man looked haggard and drawn. Well as he had himself in hand, Anstruther's twitching lips betrayed his emotion.

"I dare say you wonder why I sent for you," he said. "You need not be afraid of me; they have rendered me quite harmless. They have even taken away my watch and chain and money. Why they left me this little pearl-headed scarf-pin I don't know—probably they overlooked it. It is these little careless things which prevent the force from being quite as efficient as it might be."

Anstruther smiled in a peculiar way as he spoke. But Barmouth did not appear to notice. Anstruther walked up and down the cell, talking freely as he went.

"It was exceedingly good of you to

come," he said, "especially as I have done you so grievous a wrong. You will be perhaps pleased to hear that all the sufferings I underwent in Mexico were wasted. I never so much as laid my hand upon an ounce of the gold for which I risked my life; indeed, at the end I just contrived to save my mere existence. When I sent for you to-day it was most sincerely to ask you to pardon me for all the harm that I have done to you and others. I was going to tell you in any case the means by which you could be restored to your normal appearance.

"If the case went against me to-day I had determined to write to you and give you the address of Doctor Benin. But when I saw him in court to-day I knew perfectly well that you and he had already met; and, therefore, there was no reason for me to say anything. You and I have always been antagonistic; I do not bear you any ill-will for that."

"And I can assure you that there is no ill-will on my side," Barmouth replied. "Mind you, I cannot forget all the sufferings that I have undergone at your hands. It is strange what men will do when the greed for gold is upon them—and how little good does it tend to when the gold comes? Only a few hours ago I was longing to meet you face to face under such conditions as would render your death a secret. I would have killed you like a dog, I always meant to kill you.

"When I was paying blackmail to you under a name other than my own I was ever plotting the opportunity which would have betrayed you into my hands. I should have deemed it no crime to have rid the world of a scoundrel like yourself. And yet, as God is my witness, when I see you here like this, an outcast and a felon, when I think of the terrible way in which your great talents have been wasted, I have nothing but pity for your lamentable condition."

Anstruther took a step forward, the veins on his forehead knotted, his hands clenched in a paroxysm of passion.

"Don't talk like that," he said hoarse-

ly. "Don't begin to pity me, or I'll try to strangle you. If there was no chance of you ever being anything but what you are—I mean so far as your personal appearance is concerned—I would willingly change places with you at this moment. And I was a Nostalgo myself, and know what the punishment means. But I did not bring you here to talk entirely about myself. I have felt for a long time that Jack Masefield has viewed me with suspicion. Perhaps he thinks I am unaware of his engagement to Claire. Why, I knew every movement of his. He will be surprised to hear that I knew he was in the cupboard near Padini's room the time I was spying about there.

"What was I after? Well, Padini had certain papers of mine, and it was not policy to accuse him of the theft *then*. Just as if open-minded people like those could deceive me. I can quite forgive Masefield for his caution, but you can tell him that Claire's fortune has suffered nothing at my hands. Not that I wish to take any credit for that; it is merely that the other trustee, being a shrewd lawyer, was too clever for me. However, Claire has her two thousand a year intact, and she is free to marry Masefield when she likes.

"There is another matter of which I wish to speak to you—that is, as regards Serena. I understand that she is Lady Barmouth's sister. Well, I am glad of that, because the poor woman and her boy will have a happy home in future. I behaved abominably to Serena; I lied to her, I tricked and tormented her, so that I might get her in my power, and make use of her wonderful talents as an actress. She believed that I held her life in the hollow of my hand, and therefore she was the veriest slave to my will. But nothing wrong, Barmouth; Serena is as good and pure as your own wife. I understand that Padini has been arrested owing to his having taken a hand in that musical jugglery of mine.

"For Serena's sake he must be got rid of. All you have to do is to drop a line to the director of public prosecutions in Paris, and say that Monsieur

Lemarque is masquerading in London as Padini the violinist. After that I don't think Serena will be troubled with her precious husband any more. And now I will not detain you any longer. If you will accept this pin as a souvenir I shall be glad. You see it is a small pearl on a gold wire. There is one peculiarity about it. The pearl is hollow, and it often occurred to me how useful it would be to conceal a drop or two of some virulent poison inside in case one fell into the hands of the authorities."

Filled with a sudden suspicion, Barmouth darted forward. The faint mocking smile of Anstruther's face told him as plainly as words could tell exactly what was going to happen. He reached forward and clutched Anstruther. It was too late.

"For Heaven's sake, Anstruther," Barmouth cried. "Think; pause before you do anything so rash, so blasphemous."

"It is very good of you," Anstruther said quite coolly. "I know you mean well, but this is the way that I prefer."

CHAPTER LI.

THE END OF IT ALL.

Barmouth could see a little speck of foam like a white feather on the lips of his companion. He saw Anstruther throw up his head, and the apple of his throat moved as if in the act of swallowing. The whole thing had been so swift and unexpected, that Barmouth could not blame himself for what had happened. There was no occasion to tell him that the pearl had contained some deadly poison, for already the effect of it was apparent on Anstruther's features. He gasped painfully, as if some terrible pain had gripped him by the heart, his features twitched horribly, yet he smiled with the air of a man who is by no means displeased with himself.

"Yes," he said quite naturally, "I think it will be just as well if you call in the warder who is watching us through

that grating in the door, and tell him everything that has happened."

Barmouth lost no time in doing so. There was a great tramping and commotion in the corridor outside, and presently Bates and the prison doctor rushed in. By this time Anstruther was seated on the only chair in the cell; there was a heavy bead of moisture on his face. He smiled faintly at Bates.

"It is exactly as Lord Barmouth has said," he explained. "When your people deprived me of everything that I possessed they forgot to remove a tiny, pearl-headed pin from my scarf. It was only a very small pearl—you could have bought the thing in any West End shop for a sovereign; but the gem was not so innocent as it appeared to be. Inside I had caused to be placed one drop of deadly poison no larger than a pin's head. I have had it there for years in case of an emergency. I have always had a presentiment that sooner or later the end would be thus, and I am much too active-minded a man to care to pass years in jail.

"I should have gone mad under treatment like that. Therefore, you see I was quite ready for you. I had only to take that pin from my tie, and make the tiniest puncture in the tip of my tongue, then all I had to do was to crush the pearl within my teeth, and the thing was done. There need be no inquest; the poison in question was one drop from the fang of a cobra. See, the end is very near."

Anstruther staggered to his feet, threw his hands above his head, and collapsed in a heap on the floor. There was one fearful shuddering contortion of the muscles, and after that a rigid stillness. The prison doctor bent down, and examined the silent form carefully. He shook his head gravely.

"My services here are absolutely useless," he said. "The man is dead. I only wonder that he lived so long. It was a sad ending to what might have been a brilliant career."

"It was a brilliant career," Bates muttered. "We never had a detective in the force as clever as Mr. Anstruther. Shall I call a cab for you, my lord?"

There is nothing to gain by your waiting any longer."

Barmouth nodded in an abstracted kind of way; he hardly appeared to heed what Bates was saying. In the same dreamy fashion he was driven homeward. On reaching Belgrave Square he found that Benin had gone off on some business, leaving Jack and Rigby behind him. In a few words he told the others what had happened. There was nothing more to be said on the matter, and no great feeling was expressed, seeing that Anstruther had never been anything else but an enemy to all of them.

"He seemed desirous of making amends at the last," Barmouth said. "For instance, he has shown us a way whereby my wife's unfortunate sister can be forever free of Padini. Also he informed me that Miss Claire Helmsley's fortune is absolutely intact. He was cynical to the last, and suggested that Jack here should marry the lady of his choice without delay."

"That is very good of him," Jack said dryly. "But as far as I am concerned, I shall not be in the least sorry to hear that Claire has nothing. I do not want the suggestion made that I am in any way a fortune-hunter. It is not a pleasant idea."

"What is the good of talking that nonsense," Rigby exclaimed. "My dear fellow, you are getting on splendidly with your literary work, and in a year or so from now your income will be quite equal to Miss Helmsley's. Besides, nobody who knew you would think of accusing you of fortune-hunting. And so long as Miss Helmsley shares the opinions of your friends, I don't see that it in the least matters to anybody else."

Lady Barmouth came into the room at the same moment with an intimation that Claire was up in the drawing-room, and would like to see Jack as soon as he was at liberty. Jack went off with alacrity. There was a soothing feeling now that no obstacle any longer stood in his path. He had no fear of the future, so far as Claire was concerned, Anstruther being once out of the way.

It was only at this moment, with the knowledge of a placid future before him, that Jack realized how great the mental strain had been.

He found Claire waiting for him in the drawing-room. She advanced with a smile upon her face, and he took her in his arms and kissed her, feeling at last that she was his own, and that there was no shadow of further crime between them. He was just a little grave and silent, and love's quick eyes were there to detect the somber shade on his face. Very quietly Jack told Claire all that had happened. It was some little time before either spoke.

"I am glad to find that your fortune is intact, my dearest girl," Jack said. "I shall have to work hard now, so that when the good time comes I shall be able to marry you, feeling that my position is equal to your own. It must not be said——"

"It is not going to be said," Claire replied, looking up into her lover's face with a winning smile. "Jack, dear, I know exactly what is running in that silly head of yours. I can see I shall have to be very severe with you. Now answer me a question, sir."

"A dozen if you like," Jack replied. "What is it?"

"Well, about the time we first met, and you were so foolish as to fall in love with me. Confess it now: did not you regard me as a poor dependent of Mr. Anstruther's, without so much as a penny of my own? I knew that you loved me long before you told me so—I felt it here in my heart. And yet when you asked me to be your wife, not so many weeks ago, and suggested we should keep the matter a secret as we were too poor to marry, did you not know then that I was an heiress in a small way?"

"I am prepared to admit it," Jack said. "But you see, my darling, it is pretty certain that some people——"

With a pretty little imperious gesture, Claire laid her hand on her lover's lips. Her eyes looked sweetly into his.

"I am not going to hear another word," she cried. "Oh, what does it

matter to anybody as long as we are satisfied. My dearest boy, do you want me to go down on my knees and implore you to marry me. I will do it if you like."

Jack's reply was evidently suitable, and to the point, for the fond look came over Claire's face again, and for some time they were silent. It was Claire who broke the silence at length.

"You need me," she whispered. "We shall be none the less happy, because that dark cloud of poverty is not likely to dim our future. I have pictured to myself a dear little house in the country where we could have roses and trim lawns and Old World gardens, and where you could work in a beautiful study lined with old oak and filled with blue china.

"I don't mind telling you, Jack, that I have picked out the house, and my other guardian is now settling the purchase of it for me. Think how nice it would be to be able to sit down every morning with a contented mind, and not care whether you did one page or twenty, so long as you felt sure that you were doing nothing but your best work. I always think every author ought to have a fortune of his own, and thus be without the necessity of turning out his work by the yard, so to speak."

Claire might have said more, only she noted the dancing imp of mischief in Jack's eyes. He kissed her tenderly again.

"I had no idea I was going to have so practical a wife," Jack said. "But do not let us be altogether selfish; let us give a thought or two to other people. There is not the slightest reason why the full significance of this Nostalgic business should ever be made public. And no more posters will appear; the public will marvel for a time and ask questions, then the thing will be forgotten when the next great sensation comes along. I will tell Rigby that he is to mention no names when he tells his wonderful story in the *Planet*—at least, he is not to mention the names of any of our friends. Now let us go down to the dining-room, and see what

they have arranged. I am very anxious to know."

Meanwhile, all the arrangements had been completed by those most concerned. As Lord Barmouth explained, he had a very quiet country-place in the neighborhood of Hindhead, and there the operation upon himself and Seymour was to take place.

"I want Claire to come with me," Lady Barmouth said. "Of course, Serena and her boy will be with us, and I understand that arrangements are being made to rid us finally of the attentions of Signor Padini. The place is near enough to London for Mr. Masefield to run down as often as he finds it possible. My dear Claire, you are looking so radiantly happy, that I need not ask you if you have settled matters with Jack."

"It was not an easy task," Claire laughed and blushed. "I almost had to go down on my knees to him. He said he would be accused of fortune-hunting or something equally absurd."

"I am exceedingly glad to hear of it," Lady Barmouth said heartily. "I have set my heart upon a little program, and I hope you will allow me to carry it out. I want the marriage to take place from our house at Hindhead. Lord Barmouth will give you away, and we'll make quite a society affair of it."

"But not till Lord Barmouth is quite right," Claire said. "Dear Lady Barmouth, you are too kind to me. Let me confess that I had hoped for something like this, but I did not intend to marry Jack till I could have all my good friends there. In perhaps three months' time it may be possible that all this——"

"Two months," Lord Barmouth laughed. "Both my good friend Seymour here and myself will be perfectly well by that time. I have thought it all out, and there need not be any gossip. It will be merely announced in the society papers that I have recovered from the painful malady which has so long afflicted me, and there will be an end of the matter. We are all going down to Hindhead to-morrow, and the operation takes place on Saturday. Accord-

ing to what Doctor Benin said, it is a mere matter of a fortnight in bed, and at the end of a month we shall be quite like other people. Now let us have dinner without the servants. It will be pleasant to wait upon ourselves."

Very quietly and unostentatiously the little party set out for Hindhead the following day. Not even the servants knew what was in the wind; they merely gathered that Lord Barmouth was never really well, and that he was taking an invalid friend with him. Doctor Benin's arrival caused no sensation, the household staff being informed that a clever surgeon had come from Paris, who hoped to restore their master to a normal state of health.

It was a fortnight later that Barmouth and Seymour came down-stairs looking a little drawn and white, but otherwise exactly like two ordinary men who had just recovered from some commonplace illness. Serena was there with her boy, but not the Serena of old. Years seemed to have fallen from her shoulders, there was a color in her face and a sparkle in her eyes which fairly astonished Jack when he saw her. He pressed her hand silently, saying no word, and Serena understood him more thoroughly than if he had

been gifted with the finest eloquence in the world.

It was all ended and done with at last; the organ had pealed out its triumphal march, the cherry-cheeked children had cast their last handful of flowers at the feet of the happy bride, the wedding was over, and now the carriage stood at the door. Claire recollected it all clearly afterward, but at the moment she felt like one who dreams pleasant things. It was only when the prosaic banging of the railway carriage door struck upon her ears that she came entirely to herself again. The train was speeding through the peaceful landscape, Claire leaned her head tenderly on Jack's shoulder, and a sigh of happiness escaped her.

"What is that sigh for?" Jack asked tenderly.

"Peace and happiness," Claire cried. There was just a suggestion of tears in her eyes. "It seems so strange to be with you like this, and yet only the other day—but I will not think of that. We will say no more about the dark days, but dwell with the future."

Jack bent and kissed the quivering red lips. Then a great content came into their hearts, and they were silent.

THE END.

HELPING HIM OUT

A STORY is being told at the expense of a young curate who has recently been appointed to a country parish.

It was his first wedding and he was terribly nervous. The bridegroom, a burly fellow, smiled encouragingly, and audibly remarked that "everybody hed to larn," when the cleric made his first few blunders.

Matters got serious when the curate, turning to the smiling bridegroom, asked:

"Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded husband?"

The bride tittered, but the clergyman, with a very red face, tried again.

"Wilt thou have this man to thy wedded woman?"

There was a general titter, and even the bridegroom looked a trifle ruffled. There was a look of fierce determination in the curate's eye as he loosened his collar and proceeded:

"Wilt thou have this husband—ahem! Wilt thou have this wedding—Wilt thou——"

At this the bridegroom interfered.

"Aw don't knaw wot yer wants me ter hev," he remarked, "but Aw coom here for her," bringing his horny hand down on the bride's shoulder, "an' Aw'll hev her or nowt."

A Chat With You

IT may be a good thing for your health to slacken up and neglect your business somewhat during the hot months, but it is often bad for the business. Among magazine editors, it has long been a time-honored tradition that the public didn't buy magazines so much during the summer, nor read them with so much interest. Hence, the frequent drop in quality during the summer.



THIS theory, in our opinion, is the result of a strange confusion of mind, and represents an ingenious transposition of cause and effect. If the magazine does not sell as well as usual in the summer, it is generally because the contents are not as good as usual. As an indication of our sincerity and our willingness to back our opinions with our money, we are now working harder than ever to get and print the best possible stories for the magazine. The best time to line the ball out over the shortstop's head is when that gentleman has decided that he doesn't like the glare of the sun in his eyes and that the game's as good as won, anyway. Lives of great magazines are not unlike the lives of great men, who, as the poet says, "are toiling upward through the night" while their companions are taking the rest cure for insomnia.



AS an example of what we are trying to get in the way of compelling and unusual short stories, take "The Long Arm of Coincidence," by George

Steele, in next month's issue. Detective stories, stories of mystery and the detection of crime, are as old and probably older than written language. You will find at least one well-told detective story in the Bible. In the *Odyssey*, Homer celebrates the career of the man who is perhaps the real prototype of Sherlock Holmes. In the Persian and Arabic there are a number of old detective tales which have since been revamped in many disguises.



NO type of story is capable of more infinite variety, no story gives more infinite variety, no story gives more scope to the writer's ingenuity, observation of human character, or skill in narrative. We have always been especially anxious to secure the best contemporary specimens of this class of literature, and, here and there, we think that we have succeeded.



THE Long Arm of Coincidence" as a story preserves well the classical unities of time, place, and action. Within the space of a few hours a mysterious and horrible crime is disclosed, the criminal is discovered and arrested. During his investigations, which take place in a New York club-house, the detective is himself placed under arrest, and while still handcuffed springs the trap which captures the real culprit. We think that we have told you enough to show you that this story is not without inci-

A CHAT WITH YOU—Continued.

dent and ingenuity of plot. It would take us a much longer time to tell you how good it really is.



WHILE we are on the subject of detective stories we would like also to call your attention to "Queen Draga's Cape," a two-part story, the first half of which will appear next month. It is by J. Kenilworth Egerton, and relates one of the most entertaining exploits of Tommy Williams, dilettante artist and whole-souled detective. The cape of Queen Draga played a part in the late Servian revolution and the mystery attending its purchase in a Moslem bazaar, the drunken Englishman and the beautiful Countess who were so strangely interested in it, baffles and fascinates at the same time.



STILL another detective story is "The Waddy," by W. B. M. Ferguson, in the same number. We call it a "detective" story, although in it there is no detective, and, properly speaking, no criminal. At the same time, it is the story of a mystery which unfolds rapidly as the story progresses. It is a very short story, with enough dramatic action and intensity crammed into its few thousand words to furnish forth a four-act play. Two other short stories radiating the same fascinating tension are "In the Black Night," by George Randolph Chester, and "His Lone Defence," by Roy Norton. The first is the story of a feud which terminates suddenly and unexpectedly after a round dozen lives have been sacrificed on either side. The other is a Western story, one of the best that Norton has ever written.

HEARTS and Diamonds" is a "Lost Legion" story of adventure in Yucatan, and "A Part of the Game" is a racing story, written by Allan Taylor in such a way as to make you see the green of the paddock and feel the movement and energy of the race.



THERE are other splendid short stories in the same number. "The Girl and the Bandit," by B. M. Bower, describes a decidedly unusual experience of Jack Bellamy, a mild-mannered character who asked for nothing but peace and quiet, but who was always regarded by those with whom he came in contact as a "bad man" of the most desperate and implacable type. Then there is a funny story by T. Jenkins Hains, and another Western story by Bertrand W. Sinclair.



THE complete novel which opens the August issue is "The Silent Service," by George Bronson-Howard, and deals with diplomatic complications in New York and Washington. The central figure is a retired army officer who has gone into the diplomatic service. It represents the work of a considerable period of time on the part of the author and is one of his best stories.



WHAT we are aiming at continually in the magazine is an all-star cast. During the coming year we will present to you the work of three authors whose work is comparatively new to you, but each of whom now stands highest in his own particular field. During the coming year, the great bulk of the best work they are doing will appear in THE POPULAR. They are Arthur Stringer, Ralph D. Paine, and H. G. Wells. Next month we will tell you more about them.

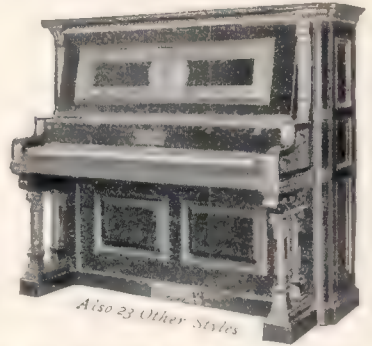
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"THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS"

The July number of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE will contain some features the mere announcement of which will be enough to concentrate attention and stimulate interest. But this is not all, for it will be found that the stories equal in quality the reputation of the authors.

HENRY C. ROWLAND

for instance, is well known as a writer of uniformly interesting tales. He contributes the complete novel, entitled "AN AMERICAN PASHA," and it will be found to be as absorbing a story as can be asked for. It is full of adventure, from beginning to end, the action leading from one dramatic situation to another, and the characters all interesting people.

One of the most important events in the magazine world will be the opening chapters of a new story by MAY SINCLAIR. It is called "The Immortal Moment."

VIRGINIA TRACY will be represented by one of her best stories of theatrical life, called "BABES IN THE WILDERNESS."

ANNE WARNER will have one of the best short stories she has ever written, entitled "WHEN HEAVEN TOUCHED THE EARTH."

STEEL WILLIAMS will have another of his Western tales, the best this time, in "A BLACKSTONE OF THE BAD LANDS."

Other short stories will be by JANE W. GUTHRIE, JEANNETTE COOPER, OWEN OLIVER and TORRANCE BENJAMIN.

RUPERT HUGHES will have another article, supplemental to the one in the June number, called "THE CLUE TO THE BEST MUSIC."

MRS. WILSON WOODROW, with the attractive title, "RUDOLPH'S LITTLE PLAYMATE," has a story in her best vein.

O. HENRY needs no introduction. All that is necessary to say is that a new story by him will be in the July number.

JAMES HOPPER is the author of a tale called "My Mission," which will keep the reader oblivious to everything else to the end.

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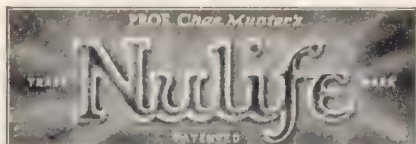
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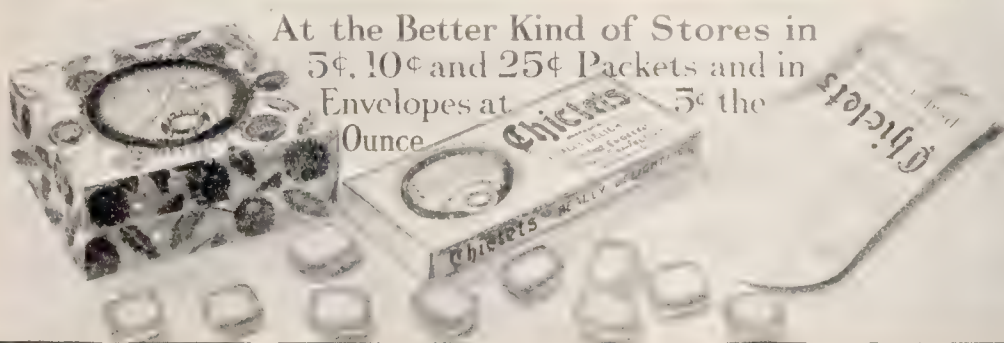


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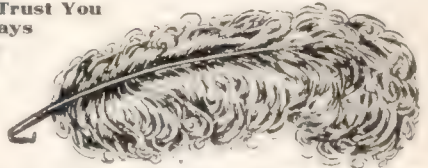
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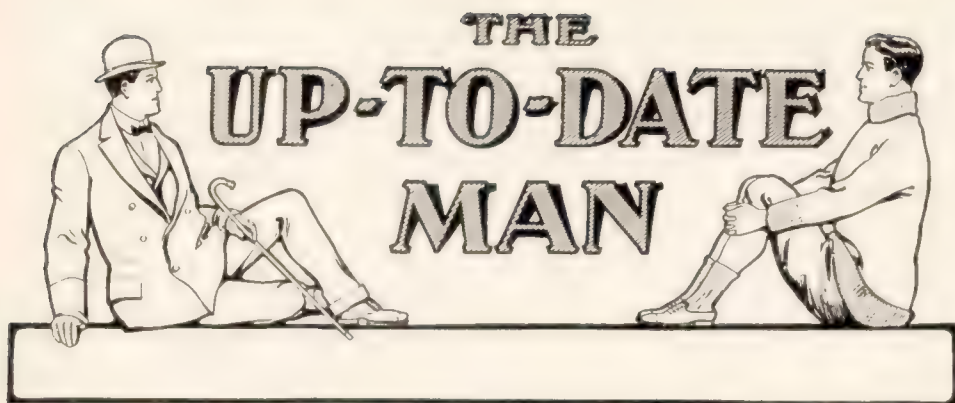
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WHAT hat and gloves to wear with the "Tuxedo" suit of a summer evening puzzles some men. The black Alpine is too somberly gloomy and the "Opera" and silk hats are, of course, dedicated to ceremonious dress. A finely woven "split" straw with a black ribbon is in the best form. It looks both cool and comely. "Sennits" or coarsely woven straws are not correct. As to gloves, most of us do not wear any, but this is neither becoming nor befitting. White kid and white buck are heavy and heating. The best glove is one of thin gray silk. It is light and cool and, being launderable, one need not fear soiling from perspiration. Moreover, the gray silk glove harmonizes admirably with the gray silk or linen waistcoat decreed as proper for club or dinner dress.

For week-end visits the gray morning coat, or semi-frock, is preferred to the black frock. One may go a step farther and wear the gray frock, or "park suit," dear to the Briton, but not in general vogue here. It is the ideal suit for coaching, lawn parties and formal meets out of doors. A bit of a departure is a frock suit of dark blue, worn with a steel-gray waistcoat and gray gloves. Another unusual costume observed among the spectators of a recent tennis tournament in Newport was a frock suit of snuff-brown worn with a white serge waistcoat and black calfskin shoes with white boxcloth uppers.

Dress-suit cases are not carried as much as formerly. The "smart" traveling receptacle is the English "kit bag." It holds more than a suit-case and, being expensive, is not so common. Usually it is made of grained

cowhide or pigskin with a leather or linen lining and drop-handles. Cabin bags of sole-leather, with straps and capped corners are indispensable to luxurious ocean crossing. Besides the ordinary hatbox designed to hold a single hat, there are capacious boxes which accommodate four hats, a straw, derby, silk hat and Opera. These will be found wonderfully convenient for both short and long trips.

With the advent of sultry nights, the Tuxedo suit assumes the position to which both its comfort and convenience entitle it. Condemning this suit as a "hybrid" and an "interloper" is all very well, but none can gainsay that it fills its special niche admirably. For dining in the open, for the roof-garden, the country club and for every occasion and function in summer that is tinged with informality, the Tuxedo is wonderfully handy and wholly appropriate. A novel Tuxedo shirt has three stud-holes set closely together in the center of the bosom, instead of spread apart. As the waistcoat buttons are similarly grouped and as both shirt-studs and waistcoat buttons conform precisely in color, the effect is decidedly "chic." A Tuxedo tie worthy of note is woven of black silk with a gray satin center stripe to match the gray cloth of the suit.

Colored shirts are now permissible with afternoon dress, though the ground of the cloth should preferably be white with a simple stripe or figure. Elaborately colored and patterned shirts are in doubtful taste. In order to give the afternoon shirt plenty of "body" and differentiate it altogether from the softer garments designed for morning and lounge use, it is made of



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How to Order. If your dealer hasn't genuine "Holeproof" Hose, bearing the "Holeproof" Trade-mark, order direct from us. State kind, colors, size and weight desired, and remit in any convenient way (\$2.00 per box for regular "Holeproof," and \$3.00 for "Holeproof" Lustre-Sox or Lustre-Hose). We will fill your order promptly and prepay express. **Remember—all "Holeproof" Hose are guaranteed for 6 months.** If they need darning in that time, you get new hose FREE. Send for book "How to Make Your Feet Happy."

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bosom is composed of numberless narrow tucks like those on a finely pleated shirt. There are the usual pockets and the garment closes with four large pearl buttons. This is assuredly a daring departure, though the idea is a capital one. A waistcoat fashioned of shirting is much cooler and lighter than flannel, may be tubbed and ironed like a shirt and can be worn without discomfort during grilling weather, when most of us go waistcoatless.

Just now when the flight to the Continent is under way, the question of what evening clothes to wear aboard ship becomes of import. Owing to the very informal and even intimate spirit which prevails among fellow passengers, the swallow-tail suit is not necessary save at ceremonious dinners, concerts in the saloon and the like. The Tuxedo suit serves very well for the ordinary dinner, the smoking-room and a friendly game of cards. The rules governing evening dress are much the same as those which apply to any large hotel, except that they are less strictly enforced, because passengers come into more frequent and close contact with one another. "Dressing up" aboard ship is never to be recommended. Narrow quarters and the desire to be at ease and free oneself from rule and rote lead the average man—and quite properly—to dress for comfort rather than convention.

Quite often the fold collar accompanies the morning coat, and with it one wears an Ascot cravat. This collar is only proper with the morning coat and not with the frock. Silk hats with "Frenchy" flattish brims look "smart" on a youngster who carries himself with a bit of an air, though they are too extreme to be attempted by the average man.

The nearness of grilling weather makes comfort the chief consideration in dress. Athletic undersuits are worn by every man who prizes ease and poise. A fad in the university set is to wear a silk-and-cotton outer shirt and knee-length drawers of the same material together with a sleeveless undershirt of fine white lisle. Brown and green are the favored shades in shirtings to conform to the fashionable colors in jacket suits.

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It is a pleasure for us to recommend you to your nearest dealer. When a dealer once puts in the **Shawknit** line he sticks to it, because when a man once wears the **Shawknit Socks** he will take no other.

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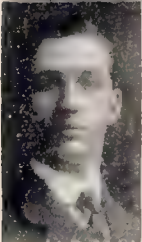
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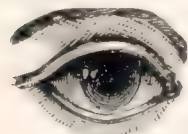
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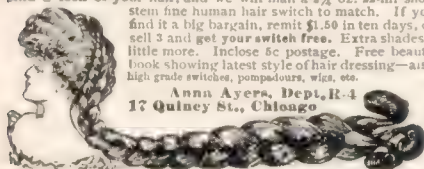
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"Where Angels Fear to Tread" is the title of another "human interest" story, being by Jeannie Pendleton Ewing, whose "Whitest Thing on Broadway" will be pleasantly remembered. "The Two Sons of Antonio," by Harold C. Burr, presents a strong psychological problem attractively.

By Perriton Maxwell, the author of "The Sweetness of Belle Hazard," is a second highly humorous story of the same character, entitled "The Adam Turner That Was"—another scream! "The Further Adventures of Snub Smith, Office Boy" will reintroduce another mirth-provoker. Also humorous is "The Old Man of the Mountains," the tale of a whimsical, gentle ex-sea-captain and his hillside farm

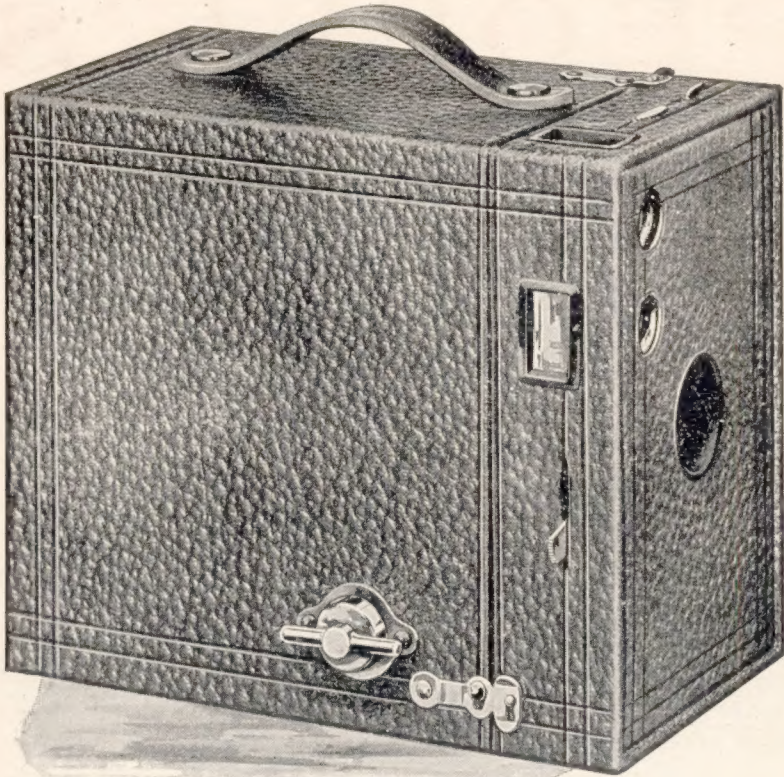
"Bobby Graeme, of G Troop" reappears in "The Passing of the Adjutant"—the second of this series. "Billings-Hobo" is again with us, and "Mrs. Maguire at the Corner" holds forth humorously.

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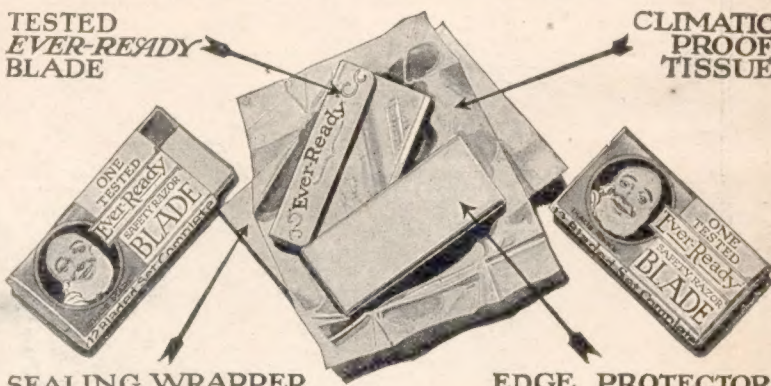
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Extra Blades 10 for 50c.

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'Ever-Ready' 12 Bladed Safety Razor

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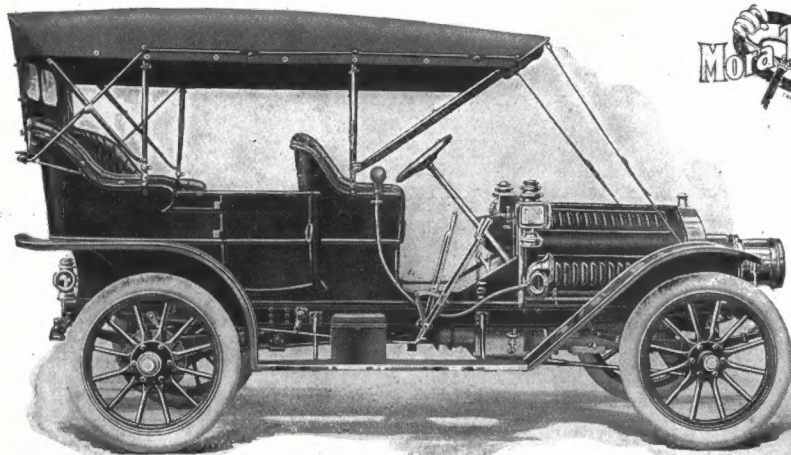
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For your protection the **genuine** is put up in **non-refillable** boxes—the "**Box that Lox**," with MENNEN'S face on top. Guaranteed under the Food and Drugs Act, June 30th, 1906. Serial No. 1542. Sold everywhere, or by mail 25 cents. **Sample free.**

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